The Mennonite Church and Modernism

By John Horsch

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FOREWORD

The Mennonite Church of today finds itself face to face with the most insidious foe of the old Bible faith. Modernism is a perversion and denial of the fundamentals of the faith yet, by an obvious distortion of church history, it claims to be true Mennonitism, the faith of the Fathers. It is safe to say that never before in her history has the Church faced such a crisis.

A few years ago, in the book *Modern Religious Liberalism,* the writer attempted to set forth the issues involved in this conflict, and to expose the institutions and persons that have defended modernism. In this book liberalism in the Mennonite Church was not considered. It is a particularly disagreeable task to publicly oppose those who are in the same fold with us. But in recent years modernism within the Church has become more aggressive and defiant in its attitude toward the Church. While in the Church papers controversy is, on the whole, undesirable and, as is generally admitted, should be as much as possible avoided, yet it is necessary to meet the modernist opposition and to give needed information. There is reason to believe that the great majority of those on whom the modernist leaders are counting, are lacking information as regards their position.

The success of modernism is in general due to its Christian appearance and its dissimulating

use of the language of orthodoxy. The principal danger arises from a possible failure on the part of the Church at large to see the real issue. A conservative, believing body, such as is the Mennonite Church, will not knowingly and considerately yield to the liberalistic spirit of the age nor accept the modernization and denial of the fundamentals of the faith.

This pamphlet contains various verbatim excerpts from the above mentioned book.

J. H.

Scottdale, Pennsylvania.

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THE MENNONITE CHURCH AND MODERNISM

I

MODERNISM AND OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD IT

The following definition of modernism, as contrasted with fundamentalism, has been published in various liberal and conservative papers. It is approved by leaders on both sides. The terms *modernism, liberalism* and *modern theology* are synonyms..

FUNDAMENTALISM	MODERNISM
1. The Bible IS the Word of God.	1. The Bible CONTAINS the Word of God.
2. Jesus Christ is THE Son of God in a sense in which no other is.	2. Jesus Christ is A Son of God in the sense that ALL men are.
3. The birth of Jesus was SUPERNATURAL.	3. The birth of Jesus was NATURAL.
4. The death of Jesus was EXPIATORY.	4. The death of Jesus was EXEMPLARY.
5. Man is the product of SPECIAL CREATION.	5. Man is the product of EVOLUTION.
6. Man is a SINNER, fallen from original righteousness, and, apart from God's redeeming grace is hopelessly lost.	6. Man is the unfortunate VICTIM of environment, but through self-culture can make good.

7. Man is justified by FAITH in the atoning blood of Christ. Result: Supernatural regeneration from ABOVE.	7. Man is justified by WORKS in following Christ's example. Result: Natural development from WITHIN.

It is seen that the differences and contrasts between modernism and fundamentalism, are of such nature that they could not be greater. The one is the confession of the fundamentals of the faith, and the other the denial. The one is faith, the other unbelief. Both cannot be one and the same religion.

President A. C. McGiffert, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, a modernist institution, says:

> We have learned, not to think of the Bible as the final and infallible authority and have come to see that there is no such authority and that we need none. The result has been a change of simply untold consequence. The conservatives who feared and opposed Biblical criticism in its early days because *they saw what a revolution it portended* were far more clearsighted than most of the liberals who thought that it meant simply a shifting of position. —*The chasm is deep. What is before us no one knows.*

One of the most noted defenders of religious liberalism, the late Professor George Burman Foster, of the University of Chicago, said:

> The sum of what I have just been urging amounts to the profoundest change of religious thought known to history. — One may say that not supernatural regeneration, but natural growth; not divine sanctification, but human education; not supernatural grace, but natural morality; not the divine expiation of the

cross, but the human heroism—or accident?—of the cross; . . . not Christ the Lord, but the man Jesus who was a child of his time; not God and His providence, but evolution and its process without an absolute goal—that all this, and such as this, is the new turn in the affairs of religion at the tick of the clock.

A writer in The Moravian says:

It is every day becoming more apparent that in our churches two irreconcilable theological drifts are forcing themselves on our attention. The one we might call the conservative or positive or evangelical position. The other we might call the liberal or speculative or higher-critical position. In the final analysis of these two positions the former insists on a supernatural basis for the Christian religion, while the latter denies the supernatural and substitutes a purely natural basis.

The former position has in our day found its clearest expression through the Bible Institutes and training schools, through evangelistic and missionary activity; the latter through Unitarianism, and so-called higher criticism in many of our theological seminaries and liberal pulpits. Thinking people are discovering, even if rather slowly, *that these two positions can never be reconciled.* They have been, are, and always will be, fundamentally at war with each other, and we might just as well save our precious breath crying "Peace! Peace!" when there can be no peace.

"Throughout all Protestantism," says a recent writer, "especially in the colleges and theological training-schools under the guise of 'higher criticism' and 'liberal Christianity' there is being waged the most determined and far-reaching assault upon our holy Christianity that it has ever endured since apostolic times. The Christian religion, 'wounded in the house of its friends' must get

the victory over these insidious but deadly foes."

It would indeed be useless to deny or belittle the radical contrasts between the old Bible faith and religious liberalism. So great and fundamental are these differences that, if the one is Christianity, the other must be something else. It has been said that liberalism has changed all the doctrines of the old faith as held by Christendom from the beginning. The fact is, as pointed out in preceding quotations, that liberalism sets aside these doctrines and disowns them. Indeed, Christianity has more in common with Judaism and some other non-Christian religions than with the full-fledged modernism.

About a year ago Professor J. Gresham Machen, of Princeton Theological Seminary, published his book *Christianity and Liberalism* in which he definitely points out that modernism is another religion, that it is not Christianity and has its roots in non-Christian systems of thought. More recently a number of leading modernists have admitted that Professor Machen's view is correct. The editor of The Christian Century, one of the most radically liberalistic journals, says (issue of January 3, 1924):

> Christianity according to fundamentalism is one religion. Christianity according to modernism is another religion. There is a clash here as profound and as grim as that between Christianity and Confucianism. Amiable words cannot hide the differences. The God of the fundamentalist is one God; the God of the modernist in another. The Christ of the fundamentalist is one Christ; the Christ of the modernist is another. The Bible of fundamentalism

is one Bible; the Bible of modernism is another. That the issue is clear and that the inherent incompatibility of the two worlds (positions) has passed the stage of mutual tolerance (in the same religious fold) is a fact concerning which there hardly seems room for any one to doubt.

The editor of the new Mennonite paper, The Christian Exponent, says in an editorial article:

> Let us not bring reproach upon ourselves and on the Christ whom we profess by quarrelling among ourselves, let us be Christians in the real and vital sense of that term. Only thus can God bless us, and only thus can we do our part in His great plan.

It is very true that those who are one in Christ, one in faith, principle and practice, will bring reproach upon the cause by quarrelling among themselves. Even where such unity does not exist, quarrelling (as this term is commonly used) is out of place. But this does not mean that the Church could extend the hand of Christian fellowship to modernism. The point in question is, Can the Church close her eyes to the fact that a number of modernist leaders have risen among us and some of them are taking an attitude of open revolt against the Church, as may be shown elsewhere?

The editor of The Christian Exponent seems to be of the opinion that love should overlook the existing differences and wink at the defiant attitude of some of the modernist leaders. Now this was the position which Zwingli and his friends held against the Fathers of the Mennonite Church in Switzerland. Their often repeated argument was that the insistence of the Mennonite Fathers on separation from the worldly state church was a proof that they

were lacking in love toward that church. The state church leaders claimed that love should cause the early Mennonites to disregard the existing differences of faith and practice. And it is important to notice that the points of difference which our Fathers were asked to compromise and disregard, did not concern the fundamentals of the faith. The Fathers were not asked to extend the hand of fellowship to people who differed from them so radically as modernism differs from the Mennonite faith. Yet they were minded to endure the severest persecution rather than confess to peace and unity at the expense of loyalty to the Word. And the principal writings of Menno Simons and Dirck Philips consist in defences of the faith against the attacks of their opponents and persecutors.

In spite of these outstanding pertinent facts there are those who warn us that there should be no controversy. A number of recent writers have expressed the curious opinion that religious controversy is contrary to the principle of love and of nonresistance. They would press the principle of peace to such a point that, rather than to offend the modernists by defending the faith, they are willing to make their peace with modernism and let it take possession of the Church. The apostles were evidently of different opinion. "Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints," is their injunction. Our Lord said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me." Unless our faith is of the modern backbone-less variety, we will uphold His testimony and defend the truth in the face of the modern denial.

While modernists claim the right to deny and attack the faith, they are of the opinion that to take a decided position for the faith involves a violation of the principle of nonresistance and Christian love.

Much as the renunciation of the old faith, on the part of liberalists, is to be regretted, the most offensive feature of religious liberalism is that it uses, as a rule, the old Biblical expresisons, and claims to be Christian theology—an improvement on the old faith;—all this in the face of the fact that some of the liberalists themselves, as we have seen, recognize the great chasm which separates them from Biblical Christianity.

II

WHAT IS FUNDAMENTALISM?

The term *fundamentalism* is not found in the dictionaries. It is a new word which has been coined after modernists had come forth with a new theology in which the old words were used in a new, modernized sense. Modernism was spread under an evangelical cloak. In consequence the believers of the old type were aroused to take a decided position against this insidious foe. They defend the fundamentals of the Christian faith and hence are called fundamentalists.

It is true that modernists also, as a rule, claim to accept the fundamentals, yet they are not and do not desire to be regarded as fundamentalists. The fact is that the real meaning of the term *fundamentalism* is the rejection of modernism. Fundamentalism is anti-modernism.

Various modernists have asserted that fundamentalism is identical with premillennarianism. But while fundamentalism teaches the literal, personal, visible second coming of Christ, the opinion that fundamentalists agree in a belief in a literal millennium is erroneous. This was made clear in an editorial article published in a recent number of one of the leading fundamentalist organs, The Sunday School Times. The great majority of the Lutheran Church as well as large sections of the Presbyterian Church are anti-modernist as well as anti-millenial. Professor J. Gresham Machen, of Princeton Theological Seminary, as a representa-

tive of fundamentalism, is second to no other writer. His book *Christianity and Liberalism* is in some respects the best defence of fundamentalism. Professor Machen does not believe in a literal millennium. He says concerning the claim that fundamentalism is premillennialism:

> It is highly misleading when modern liberals represent the present issue in the Church, both in the mission field and at home, as being an issue between premillennialism and the opposite view. It is really an issue between Christianity, whether premillennial or not, on the one side, and a naturalistic negation of all Christianity on the other. (Page 49.)

The editor of The Christian Exponent, in an article on *Nonresistance and Fundamentalism,* accuses the conservatives of the Mennonite Church of "throwing themselves unreservedly" with the fundamentalists. He says:

> One wonders sometimes how it is possible for so many people who claim to be believers in the whole Gospel and take literally the teachings of Christ, to throw themselves so whole-heartedly and unreservedly with a group which so utterly repudiates this principle of nonresistance as does the militant group which styles itself "Fundamentalists."

The question regarding the attitude of the fundamentalists toward nonresistance will be treated in another place. (See page 65). Speaking of those "who claim to be believers in the whole gospel," the editor of The Christian Exponent is evidently referring to the conservative Mennonites. But the claim that we are throwing ourselves "whole-heartedly and unreservedly" with any fundamentalists of other churches is not born out by the facts. The fact that fundamentalists

—anti-modernists—are found in various churches makes it impossible to agree with them all on every point. The case is somewhat similar to the temperance question as it concerns us. We are opposed to the liquor traffic, yet the temperance people are a motley crowd and we never thought of throwing ourselves unreservedly with them.

Now the denial of the Christian fundamentals is a greater menace to the Christian cause and to the nation than the liquor traffic. And then, prohibition savors of politics, it is in a measure a political movement while fundamentalism is nothing of the kind. We do not throw ourselves unreservedly with the anti-modernists of other churches, but we rejoice because they are fighting modern unbelief. We find ourselves fighting the same enemy and for this we shall not apologize, neither have we deserved the censure which the editor of The Christian Exponent sees fit to give us.

The question is pertinent: Have not liberal Mennonites "thrown themselves" to a greater extent with modernists than conservative Mennonites with fundamentalists of other churches? Would not the editor of The Christian Exponent have more cause, for example, to censure the Mennonite institution in Ohio which called outspoken modernists such as Professor Rall, of Evanston, Ill., and Professor Richards, of Lancaster, Pa., to give courses of lectures in a Short Bible Term, than to make the groundless assertion that we throw ourselves unreservedly with any fundamentalists of other churches?

III

ARE A PERSON'S RELIGIOUS VIEWS OF MINOR IMPORTANCE?

Several months ago an American Mennonite minister published an article in a Mennonite periodical asserting that "our people are not in danger of higher criticism." A greater menace to the Mennonite Church than the higher critics, this writer says further, are the "critics" who believe that among American Mennonites there are those who have yielded to modernist influences.

The same writer, referring to several Mennonite educators who were reputed to entertain modernist views, says:

> Yet we who had not become prejudiced have learned to love every one of these leaders.

There is not a word as to their attitude as concerns the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The inference is that, since the said writer found them to be of an agreeable, gentleman-like disposition, he holds that their orthodoxy must not be questioned.

Touching the same question, President S. K. Mosiman, of Bluffton (Mennonite) College, wrote in regard to the needed qualifications for teachers in this institution:

> In judging a man's value to the College you must depend on other factors than the question and answer method. Of course, I have questioned men as to their religious views, but I always consider that of

minor importance in estimating a man's character." (Protocol of the Thirty-first Session of the Western District Conference, page 975).

Yet it is a fact not to be denied that there are modernists and radical unbelievers who are of an agreeable disposition and possess what is generally spoken of as an unobjectionable moral character.

One of the most attractive characters the present writer has met was a young Unitarian minister. While listening to one of his discourses in which he questioned every fundamental of the faith, including the immortality of the soul, and asserted that morality was sufficient to save any man, my heart burned within me in pity seeing that he squandered his God-given talents for the cause of modernism. He had been led astray and was leading others in the wrong way though, apparently, he believed that he was right. I have yet somewhere a letter from him in which he defends his views. Again, the greatest poet living, whose gentleman-like attainments and agreeable disposition cannot be questioned, is Tagore, of India, a heathen who is an outspoken opponent of the Christian faith. They say that even Robert G. Ingersoll possessed an attractive personality.

One could only wish that the argument of the first mentioned writer were convincing and his assertion as regards the freedom of the Mennonites of America from liberalism correct. There is conclusive evidence that the contrary is the case.

IV

THE GREATEST TRAGEDY

It is sad to see in our day many ministers and educators busily engaged in spreading modernism, and what is particularly tragical is the fact that these men, at least some of them, think that they are doing God a service. They have exposed themselves to liberalistic influences to the extent that they have been led astray. They actually seem to believe that modernism is superior to the old Bible faith. How sad that a man may be sincere and yet be in serious error; that his motives may be good, and yet his teaching and influence detrimental to the Christian cause.

Yet it is a well-known fact that modernists, as a rule, are inclined to conceal their real position. They sail under false colors when they hide their liberalism under the language of orthodoxy; when they attempt to impress the Church that, regarding the fundamentals of the faith, they take an orthodox position which in reality they do not hold. Now there is where sincerity ceases. It is impossible to believe in the honesty and sincerity of men who, when speaking about the most vital questions, do not mean what they say nor say what they mean. If it were a fact that they believe liberalism to be superior to orthodoxy and that their new faith is worth while, they would not desire to be taken for orthodox Christians. The fact is that such a lack of common honesty, as their time-serving policy indicates, must be looked

upon as evidence of a break-down of moral integrity in consequence of the denial of the old Bible faith.

Zion's Advocate said a few years ago:

> When men surrender their faith in the supernatural and in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church, and can no longer preach and teach them, why do they not, like honorable gentlemen, resign the responsibilities which they have accepted, and go out and establish a platform of their own? If they have the truth, why do they not show their confidence in their teachings by organizing their own institutions instead of continuing to receive their support from those whose beliefs they have solemnly promised to espouse? I think that common honor and honesty would lead them to such a step.

A striking evidence of an unsound moral attitude is found in the fact that some of the modernized seminaries not only practice counterfeiting and "hedging" but they do so against the will of the churches who own and support the seminaries. Without scruple, as it seems, the modernists, though they admit that their teaching differs radically from the old faith, are using money designed to the maintenance and propagation of the primitive Bible faith. Mission money given by consecrated Christians for the propagation of the Gospel is used by liberalists for the purpose of modernizing the Christian converts in heathen lands.

A most discouraging "sign of our time" is the prevalence of the practice of "hedging" among theological writers and professors. Men of high position in the church are playing fast and loose with words, they find it in their conscience to

make a statement of their faith with mental reservations; they are trifling with the Christian religion and morality. It is all so different from the transparent candor with which the believers of all ages have stated their faith; it is even different from the method of scientists who would deem it beneath their moral dignity to stoop to such more than questionable practices. In modern theology "hedging" and camouflage has been developed into a fine art.

The writer has in mind a book on prayer whose author is a pronounced liberalist. Though he does not believe in a God who answers prayer, but holds that the effect of prayer is entirely subjective, he has "hedged" to such extent and with such success that believing Christians have read his book, never suspecting that the author speaks of prayer in an entirely new sense and that the book is quite acceptable to radical liberalists. Many theological books are published in our day which the trained reader will recognize as unorthodox, but their authors are given to the practice of "hedging." They do not commit themselves. They may speak of such fundamental doctrines as the deity of Christ, in Incarnation, Atonement, the inspiration of Scripture. The reader is fully aware that they do not defend orthodoxy but is left in the dark regarding the question, what sort of "doxy" they represent, or what they mean when they treat of the said doctrines. None other than Dean Fenn, of Harvard University, says that readers of current theological literature must often wish that every writer were obliged to furnish a vocabulary, ex-

plaining the meaning of terms which he uses. He adds that theological writers can hardly expect a sympathetic hearing from thoughtful men unless they are willing to let them know what they are talking about. The supreme need of modern liberalism, Dean Fenn says further, is for definite and precise thinking and direct, plain speaking.

The unvarnished fact is that a large number of theological books has been published concerning which it must be said, that it is impossible for the readers to know what the authors are talking about. And those for whom these unreal, noncommittal books were written are men and women who, in their own opinion, are too far advanced in mental development to accept the doctrines of the Christian faith. Could there be ore convincing proof of the superficiality and unworthiness of modern liberalistic thought. Yet it is to the very characteristic of hedging that some of the most widely used theological books owe their popularity. A British reviewer of the *Theology* by William Newton Clarke says: "In America the fashion seems to be to defend a foregone conclusion by rhetoric. This makes the reviewing of the book before us a peculiarly difficult task. It contains a great deal of what is known as 'hedging.' "

From the viewpoint of general morality and common honesty, theological hedging and camouflage must be unconditionally condemned. Such practices are unworthy of persons of serious purpose. A man writing a book on theology who is unwilling to commit himself and to let his readers

know what he is talking about is clearly a double-minded man — a sorry figure morally.

A representative of the Ethical Culture movement, H. J. Bridges, of Chicago, writes:

> The question of intellectual honesty in church and pulpit has hitherto been utterly ignored by the mass of the public. A distinguished teacher in the Divinity School of a great university recently gave one of the cleverest exhibitions of the art of riding two horses at once that I ever witnessed. At a conference of liberals he expressed his own views about God, Christ, the Bible, and the Church, in language of masterly vagueness and ambiguity.
>
> There is nothing more repellant than the preacher who privately admits that he does not believe what he publicly utters. It is simply a question of common honesty and truthfulness in the pulpit. Nothing could conceivably be more demoralizing than this game of sanctified make-believe. None of the things that preachers generally denounce, and not all of them together are so profoundly corrupting, so ruinous to the very principles and standards of moral integrity as that which must be plainly called religious lying—preaching doctrine that the preacher himself thinks false.

This is what the editor of the Boston Herald says in a recent issue about the dishonest attitude of modernists in general:

> From the beginning the overwhelming majority of liberals in the orthodox churches have dodged the issues—have hedged, evaded, qualified and compromised. They have comforted their congregations with assurances that nothing was really happening in the world of religious thought, and that they need not therefore be disturbed. Black they have blithely called white, and error truth. For one man in the liberal camp who has the courage of his conviction, there

are a thousand, like Harry Emerson Fosdick, who shift and shuffle on every question. Now come the fundamentalists to demand a "show-down." They make their position clear and they ask that their opponents do as much!

A prominent Unitarian writer, Edmund H. Reeman, says:

> If the modernist means anything, he means, we take it, that he does **not** accept the Bible as the infallible and authoritative Word of God. He means that his God and the God of the fundamentalist are as different as chalk and cheese. He means that he does **not** believe that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin, nor that his dead body was raised from a Palestinian tomb, nor that this same Christ shall ever come again in triumph from the cloud.
>
> Why, then, does he not say so in terms as unequivocal, as simple, and as straightforward as the fundamentalist uses? Why does he not openly and frankly state that if fundamentalism is true Christianity then he is not a Christian and has no use for Christianity?

The greatest calamity is to see congregations and churches, as it were, handing the key to the citadel over to modernist leaders without knowing what they are doing. A number of examples could be given where churches failed to see the issue clearly and were deceived by the smooth, orthodox sounding words and suave attitude of modernists, until the latter have intrenched themselves in the church in such a degree that it seems impossible to remove them. Among the instances of this kind there is one of the most prominent nonresistant denominations in America.

V

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

In No. 3 of The Christian Exponent, a Mennonite writer (O. R. L.) confesses belief in the Deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures, but adds that "these indisputable verities have a thousand and one meanings for as many individuals." This writer does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. On the same question President S. K. Mosiman expresses himself in a similar way. He says the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of Scripture is "a combination of heathen philosophy and post-reformation theologies" (Protocol of the 31st Session of the Western District Conference, 1922, p. 977). In the same place the same writer confesses that he accepts the Scriptures as the Word of God. Clearly he follows the modernist usage of using an old orthodox expression in a liberalistic, unreal sense.

The doctrine of the plenary or verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is taught in the Bible and is the only doctrine of Biblical inspiration that is consistent with the claims and contents of the Bible message. Its practical meaning is that the Bible is infallible. This doctrine must not be confounded with the mechanical or dictation theory which implies the suppression of the human element altogether. Though mechanical inspiration is not claimed for the Scriptures, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that, whether the holy writers committed to writing a direct message from God (as did in many instances Moses and the pro-

phets), or whether they stated the truth as they, by divine illumination, saw it, or recorded what they themselves had witnessed, or other facts of history, they were in every instance moved by the Holy Ghost to such extent that their writings are not subject to error. This implies the principle of verbal inspiration. The Holy Spirit guided them in the choice of words to the end that the truth was expressed and error avoided. The original manuscripts of the Scriptures were in this sense verbally inspired.

Inspiration, then, must be distinguished from illumination. True, the holy writers were enlightened by the Holy Spirit, but illumination alone would not have enabled them to write the infallible Word of God. Neither can verbal inspiration be sufficiently accounted for on the ground that the writers were holy men. Many other Christian writers were true saints of the Lord. Again, it is immaterial whether all the holy writers knew at the time of their writing that the Holy Spirit was guiding them to the extent that they wrote inerrantly. Nor can it be supposed that these writers had the ability to write infallibly at all times. All this means that the holy writers were, while they wrote the Scriptures, in a very special sense the tools of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the result of the supernatural working of God. It is the Word of God. The old proof-text method of using Scripture is the method of Christ and the apostles. It is the only method consistent with Scripture teaching as to the nature of the Scriptures.

In recent times the opinion has been advanced that the inspiration of Scripture has to do merely with the thought of Scripture. It is supposed that the writers of the books of the Bible wrote the thoughts, or the messages, that were given them of God but were not under the special guidance of God. Yet unless these writers were led by God in the choice of their words to the extent that they wrote inerrantly, we should have in Scripture not the infallible revelation of God but a mere **record** of revelation — a record which would be human and therefore imperfect in character. "If inspiration does not render the holy Scriptures infallible, their nature is no longer divine but human," says Professor George Johnson.

There are at the present time theologians who would shift the authority from the infallible Bible to the infallible Christ. They are of the opinion that it matters little whether or no the Bible is inerrant so long as we have Christ and His word to build upon, just as we have Plato or other great men of antiquity. But the words of Plato can not be compared with Christ's words on point of importance. Plato did not bring to men a supernatural revelation; his writings must be judged entirely by human standards. Christ, on the other hand, taught truths that come to us as divine revelation. Some of these truths cannot be verified by experience or human knowledge. The fact that Christ was infallible would not give us infallible divine authority if we had not the inerrant statement or record of His words

and acts. What would Christ's infallibility benefit us if the record which we have of Him be unreliable? It is inconceivable—is it not?—that God would accomplish the great work of the redemption of mankind and reveal to fallen man the true way of salvation, and then leave us with a fallible account of it all—an unreliable record such as modernists believe the Scriptures to be.

Modernists tell us, as already intimated, that of the contents of Scripture only that which has to do directly with the religious life of man was given of God to the Biblical writers. This means that inspiration, even in this loose sense, would not apply to Scripture narration of historical events and hence not to the record of miracles. If this were the correct view you might believe in the inspiration of Scripture and yet question the miracles. They who hold such views deny the vital importance of Scripture narration. They ignore the fact that the truth of Christianity depends on certain historical facts, such as the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Nevertheless many of those who take such an attitude would retain some of the moral and religious teaching of the Bible.

Again if liberalistic theologians are asked how they suppose that God revealed religious thoughts to the holy writers, they answer, as a rule, that these thoughts name to them through their religious experience. The above mentioned writer (O. R. L.) says in the same article published in The Christian Exponent that individual experience

(instead of divine inspiration) is the source of the contents of the Scriptures.

Now the term "religious experience" is an impressive one. But, as may be pointed out elsewhere, "religious experience" has been deprived of all real meaning by the representatives of liberalism. In the last analysis they hold that the Bible is merely "the outgrowth of men's thinking," just as all other religious books. These modernistic theologians see in Scripture simply "man's enlarging thought and discovery of God, not God's progressive revelation of Himself to man." Nevertheless they profess to believe in the inspiration of Scripture. Now such a view of inspiration cannot be taken seriously; it is a mere make-believe. Modern theology denies the personality of the Holy Spirit. Professor H. C. Ackerman, an outspoken liberalist, asserts that the spirit that is active in religious inspiration is merely "a stirring interest" on the part of man which leads to the discovery of religious truth. In other words inspiration is not the work of the divine Spirit but of the spirit of man. It is readily seen that this doctrine of inspiration is mere word-jugglery.

The leading modern critics, then, do not distinguish between divine inspiration, in the sense in which this term is used when we speak of the inspiration of Scripture, and the various other uses of the word inspiration. They tell us that the Scriptures are inspired in a similar sense as some poem or some new idea may prove inspiring

to us. In their opinion Shakespeare and Goethe were inspired as well as the Biblical writers. Professor Edward Scribner Ames, of the University of Chicago, for example, mentions quite a number of writers: Tennyson and Whittier and Bryant and Lowell and Phillips Brooks and Shakespeare and Maeterlinck and Kepler and Darwin and John Locke and William James who, in his view, should be included in the sacred canon of Scripture.

"Modern religious thinking," says Gerald Birney Smith, "is learning to draw its inspiration from the world in which we live."

VI

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

William Newton Clarke, the well-known advocate of modernism, wrote in his work on theology: "The authority of the Scriptures is the authority of the truth that they convey." In an address given at the session of the All-Mennonite Convention held in 1919 at Bluffton, Ohio, J. E. Hartzler, president of Witmarsum (Mennonite) Theological Seminary (formerly president of Goshen College) said:

> Neither can we say that ultimate authority lies in the mere letter of the Bible. We have too long contented ourselves with the argument, "Because the Bible says so." The fact is that the Bible says so and reports things because they are true.

In other words, the writer of these sentences claims that he believes in the truths contained in the Bible, but not because the Bible says so. Again, he says, as we may directly see, that no religious doctrine (though taught in Scripture) is of value or fundamental which cannot be verified by human experience.

Here is a strange piece of modernist reasoning. The fact is that if we let go of the fact that things are true because the Bible says so, we shall find ourselves at sea regarding the most essential doctrines of the faith. The only conclusive proof which we have for the fundamental Christian doctrines, is that they are taught in Scripture. They are true because God's Word says so. Unless we are willing to accept them on the

authority of the Scriptures, we shall be in the dark concerning the greatest questions regarding our relation and duty to God and our destiny.

This writer says further in the same address:

> We have too long satisfied ourselves on inefficient tests of truth and validity. When we seek valid tests for fundamental truths, we must seek higher authority than personal opinions, than formal creeds of the past, and we must go farther back than the mere letter of the Bible itself. The source of truth is in the eternal hills of God.

Here is dogmatic teaching forsooth. Can some one explain what are the eternal hills of God, and how we may draw truth from that source? If the Scriptures are God's Word, there cannot be a higher authority than the Bible.

Again this writer, in the same address, substitutes experience for the authority of Scripture. He says:

> No religious doctrine is of value, or fundamental, which cannot be verified by human experience; that is, which cannot become assimilated and united with the spiritual system of man himself. A doctrine is fundamental only when it is capable of experience in the lives of individual men. No doctrine exists for its own sake. It exists for the sake of man; and to bless man it must be capable of becoming a part of his spiritual being, the same as food does in the natural body. We have too long believed certain abstract statements for the sake of the statements themselves, rather than for the sake of man. We have been too long swallowing theological indigestives.

The fact is that some of the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith cannot be tested or established by human experience; they must be accepted on the authority of the Word. We

have believed them because they are revealed in God's Word, since disbelieving His Word, is in the language of the apostle John, "making Him a liar."

And then there is the question of the relationship between Christian experience and the ordinances. While there is such a relationship, since true Christian experience causes a desire to obedience, yet it is difficult to see how the ordinances could be established on experience alone. It is not claimed that they cleanse from sin and renew the heart. The Quakers, therefore, do not keep the ordinances. Nevertheless they observe certain regulations regarding dress and life in general, though they do not believe that these things will change the heart. The fact remains that it is not clear how the ordinances and church regulations could be maintained on no other ground than experience.

Dr. Robert Forman Horton, a conservative British theologian, wrote:

> The real difficulty of our time, when we come to probe it, is the dethronement of the Bible from its position of unquestioned authority. From the earliest period of Christianity, even in the writings of the earliest Fathers, the sacred Scriptures were held to be the standard and the test of Christian truth: nothing was to be taught as essential except what was contained in them or could be proven by them; and up to the middle of the last century the imposing fortress of the Book remained practically unquestioned and certainly unbreached. No one within the borders of the Church hesitated to regard the Bible as effectively infallible. A quotation from any part of it

carried unquestionable weight, and decisions drawn from its decretals were the settlement of all strife.—*Liberal Protestants have lost their Bible, and in losing it have lost their religion.* How can they shelter in a building which is demolished or which is ever hidden by the scaffolding about it, necessary for perpetual repairs?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon has said:

> The turning point of the battle between those who hold "the faith once delivered to the saints" and their opponents, lies in the true and real inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. This is the Thermopylae of Christendom. If we have in the Word of God no infallible standard of truth, we are at sea without a compass, and no danger from rough weather without can be equal to this loss within. "If the foundations be removed, what can the righteous do?" And this is a foundation loss of the worst kind.

"Let us not deceive ourselves," says Professor John Gresham Machen, of Princeton Theological Seminary, "the Bible is at the foundation of the church. Undermine that foundation, and the church will fall. It will fall and great will be the fall of it."

VII

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

In another place reference has been made to a recent writer in The Christian Exponent who says that such doctrines as the Deity of Christ "necessarily have a thousand and one meanings for as many different individuals." Now this is the language of modernism. The said statement is true in regard to those who reject the supernatural birth and true Deity of Christ. To the believer in God's Word, the Deity of Christ has only one meaning. It means that Christ had the divine nature in a very particular sense, being supernaturally born and coming to this world from another realm.

Among the "thousand and one meanings" that liberalism ascribes to the Deity of Christ, the most widely accepted view, perhaps, is the one defended in a tract published by the Unitarians. The title of this tract is *Divine Because Human.* They hold that God is not what Scripture says He is, but is "the collective mind of mankind." Therefore all that is human is divine, divinity is humanity and the Deity of Christ means simply that He is human. But why speak of Deity at all if it has no real meaning?

In the address given at a session of the All-Mennonite Convention mentioned above, J. E. Hartzler said:

> When Jesus came He spoke of God as "Father." Jesus called God His Father. The term implies

moral not biological relationship. [The term biological means pertaining to the origin of life]. Jesus recognizes God as the Father of mankind.

Yet the Scriptures teach distinctly Christ's Sonship in a biological and not merely moral sense.

Under the title *"What Think ye of Christ?"* Lester Hostetler has a sermon in No. 5 of The Christian Exponent. The article is an eulogy of Christ, yet the writer makes the statement that he does not consider this a theological (or doctrinal) question. In fact he never mentions the supernatural birth of Christ. This is singular indeed in view of the fact that the supernatural birth of Christ is one of the great storm centers around which the conflict between the Christian faith and modernism is waged. To preach on the subject *What Think ye of Christ?* and never mention this point is to evade the issue. To say that this is not a theological question is to speak from the viewpoint of modernism.

Such language as is found in this article is often used by modernists. They say that we see God in Jesus, yet they hold that we see God in all men, but in Jesus in a special sense because He was a religious genius. They confess that we have in Jesus a dynamic for living and that men are changed through the presence of Christ, and they have other beautiful words on the same strain, and yet they deny the true Deity of Christ. As a rule they have much to say of the Cross and yet they do not accept the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement. Some have even confessed that He is risen and by this expression meant simply that,

since man is immortal, Jesus continued to live when He died physically. A conspicuous example of such camouflage is that of Harry Emerson Fosdick, who in a recent statement of his faith (made because his orthodoxy was questioned), asserts his belief in "the resurrected life of Jesus," while in fact he denies that Jesus' body came forth from the grave.

While the writer of the article *What Think ye of Christ?* was a student in Union Theological Seminary (New York) the present writer in a letter to him gave him a word of caution, since it was generally known that this institution is notorious for its bold denial of the fundamentals of the faith. His reply was that he was of age and could guard against wrong teachings. Later there was evidence that he accepted the Union Seminary position in regard to certain doctrines.

Dr. K. C. Anderson, of Dundee, Scotland, says well concerning the importance of the miraculous birth of Christ:

> Christianity from the beginning has been conceived as a redemptive plan, the good news of a divine being coming down from heaven to rescue fallen man, the Christ or Savior not being a member of the fallen race, but apart from it and superior to it. To make the Christ or Savior a member of the race, no matter how specially endowed with moral and spiritual qualities, is to alter the whole conception and to tear out the heart of the evangelic story. The Christian church has never yet consented to put its Christ into the same category as the prophets of the Old Testament or the philosophers of Greece, but this is just what will have to be done if the Jesus of the critics is to be accepted as the Christ.

The triumph of liberalism is really a defeat, for it means the destruction of Christianity as Christianity has been known in all ages of history. — If Jesus was a man as Socrates, Alexander, Isaiah, and Jeremiah were men, then the whole Christian world has been under a delusion. The discovery that Jesus was a man merely as those named were men, would be regarded as destructive to Christianity just as would be the discovery that Jesus never lived at all. It would be the destruction of Christianity as Christianity has been understood by the great saints and theologians of the past.

VII

SALVATION AND CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

The Gospel of salvation through the blood of Christ is to unregenerate, worldly-minded humanity as, well as to an apostate church, a foolish, despisable thing. Modernists have referred to it as "pestilential" teaching. Not a few well-known liberalistic theologians have only scoffing and ridicule for it. It is a stumbling block to the self-sufficient, self-righteous carnal modern mind. It is unpopular among those who would tune their faith to the spirit of the age. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; *but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.* —We preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ *the power and wisdom of God.*" (1 Cor. 1:18, 23, 24).

Is it not an appalling fact that there are in our day men, supposed to be ministers of the Gospel, who openly declare that the crucified Christ, as the Apostles preached Him — or, in other words, the message of salvation through the Blood — is to them as well as to their congregations a stumbling block and an offense? But to us who are saved, says the apostle, He is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Now here is clear evidence of the fundamental contrast between the non-believer and the believer.

What the one considers foolishness, the other finds to be the power of God. To him who has accepted the Gospel message and is experiencing its power in his own life there is nothing so vital, nothing so satisfying, nothing to make his heart burn within him, as the sweet story of the Gospel the message that Christ gave His life for us, "the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18). On the other hand, the preaching of a modernized gospel is indeed an offence. You cannot blame those who say they find it an uninteresting, lifeless thing. It is at best a form of Gospel minus the power thereof.

It is interesting to notice, in this connection, that modernism rejects also the Biblical doctrine of the Atonement as immoral. It is immoral, they say, that one person should be sentenced to bear another's sins. That this is said in connection with the Atonement is due to a strange perversion of this Bible doctrine. The fact is that no one was compelled to suffer for another's sin. God Himself became man in order that He might, of His own free will, bear the sin of the world. Christ is God. He became man and acted in accordance with the Father's will when He became the sin-bearer of the world. The Father, according to the eternal plan of love "laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," but He did so in accordance with the Son's own free will and plan. And mark well, the purpose of it all was to do a wonderful work of grace for those who accept the great sacrifice, namely to put away their sin and effect in them a miraculous change of heart, that henceforth they

will not serve sin. To say that this greatest of all divine plans and works is of an immoral character, is to take what for want of a more appropriate name, may be fitly called a satanic view of the Atonement.

In a word, the world and the apostate church are openly despising the old Bible faith. And those who stand loyally for the Christian faith will not fare better at their hands than did Christ and the apostles at the hands of the high priests and scribes. The days are again upon us when to bear "the reproach of Christ" means something similar as it did in the primitive Christian period.

Modern theology makes much of the fatherhood of God. For God's fatherhood in the Scriptural sense it has substituted a new doctrine which exalts God's love at the expense of His righteousness and holiness. The modern view of God's fatherhood leaves out of consideration the fact that, unless God is truth and holiness as well as love, He cannot be love in any real sense. This new doctrine ignores "the sinfulness of sin." It stands for an indulgent but soft and weak fatherhood of God; too weak to deal appropriately with sin; too sentimental to insist on the sinner taking the only way of salvation from sin. But all the glib modern talk of God's love, which ignores the Scripture teaching of sin and salvation, is nothing beyond a sickly sentimentalism which has never saved a soul nor ever will.

Hand in hand, with the rejection of the thought of Christ as the Redeemer goes the modern doctrine of salvation by character. This doc-

trine means that a good moral character, such as respectable people are supposed to have, is sufficient for salvation. It is a doctrine for those who feel that their own righteousness fills all requirements. Religious liberalism has no message for the sinner, be he respectable or not, who realizes that he is lost. The Gospel message, on the other hand, is for him who is "down and out" as well as for the one of respectable character, provided that they realize their need of salvation. The offer is to all. The vilest of sinners may come and accept it by believing that Christ, his substitute, died for him and shed His blood for his sin. The guilt and stain of sin is cancelled and the new nature implanted in him.

The Bible comes to you with a message. The message, if true, is of incomparable value. You are called upon to experience the truth of its message. It consists of truths, or doctrines, concerning God and His nature, man and his condition, the way of salvation, etc. You are bidden to believe and fully accept the message. There are excellent reasons for believing that the message is true. The most convincing reason, perhaps, is that Christianity will do for you what it claims to do. If you are conscious of personal sin and of an unsatisfactory relation to God, Christianity offers a way for fully removing the burden of sin and guilt and giving you a deep consciousness of a vital relationship to God, the relation of a child to his loving father. The Christian message points out a way to make you abound in all the fruits of the Spirit. You will be enabled to lead a life

of victory over sin and over the adverse conditions and failures of life. When the real tests come which prove the modern conceptions of God and of religion to be utterly inadequate, Christianity will make you "more than conqueror." It will turn your defeats into victories. It will make you the stronger spiritually and morally for adverse experiences.

True Christian experience will also cure you of the worldly-wise idea that the endeavor to improve social conditions is the essence of Christianity and is of greater importance than maintaining the proper personal relationship to God and bringing others into such relationship. Unless your Christain faith is mere show and pretence, you will clearly see that it is the greatest treasure which you possess. You would willingly give your earthly possessions and social advantages for your faith. You are convinced that you can render no greater service to your fellow-man than to get him to accept the Christian message.

Christian experience, to be worthy of the name, presupposes Christian faith. Such experience is excluded where the fundamentals of the faith are treated with indifference or denied. Discounting the truth of the Gospel makes Christian experience impossible. Deny the Deity of Christ and the Atonement and you destroy the possibility of true Christian experience. Again, accept the Gospel message unreservedly and you will experience a great change of mind and heart. If your faith is steadfast, the reality of this change will become more and more clear to you. The change

is the result of personal faith in Jesus Christ — not of following a natural impulse but of giving heed to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is not mere development of natural religious powers, but is of a supernatural character — not your own work but the work of God.

Christian experience, then, is the consciousness of a supernatural personal relationship to God, the realization of being right with God, being His child, through the great work of Jesus Christ. Let no one suppose that this means simply a belief in the popular doctrine of the fatherhood of God. On the contrary, it means a realization of the contrast between being God's child by regeneration and being His child in the sense as taught by modern theology, namely in the sense that you were His child before your conversion. True Christian experience brings the firm conviction of the reality of the great redemption wrought by Christ; of the reality of personal salvation through Him.

Liberalistic leaders have asserted that the Biblical doctrine of salvation is unacceptable to them because, so they tell us, it concerns itself only with the individual, and not with society and its great needs. We are told that the modern mind will not accept an individualistic gospel and that religion must be socialized. Salvation must be interpreted in terms of social service and social reconstruction. The representatives of religious liberalism ignore the fact that the greatest factor for substantially improving things on earth is the personal inward transformation through the Gospel. This is the great power to produce moral

character without which true social improvement is impossible. There will always be social improvement to the extent that the message of the Gospel is accepted and the precepts of the Gospel are lived.

Furthermore, modernism overlooks the fact that personal salvation is also a far more important matter for the individual than the privilege to live in a socially improved society. It is more important to have the victory of the spirit through a personal relationship to God than to have one's social and political and economic desires satisfied. And the thought that the world may be regenerated through human instrumentality, or in other words, that conditions on earth may be improved to such extent that men are no longer born in sin and do no longer need personal salvation through Jesus Christ — this thought is utterly fallacious. If individual reformation does not change the heart of the one who reforms, neither will improvement of social conditions break the organized power of evil that is manifest in the world. It is quite true that desirable reforms may often be accomplished, but to reconstruct, or regenerate the world through human instrumentality is impossible. It is not a man's job.

While these facts should not be lost sight of, it is on the other hand, as intimated in a preceding paragraph, just as important to remember that the Christian church, in so far as she fulfills her calling, is the light of the world and the salt of the earth. It is a matter of the utmost importance that the

influence of a Christian's life is what God has designed it to be. The fact that the world cannot be regenerated through human effort can by no manner of means be interpreted to mean that the believer has no responsibility as to the temporal and eternal well-being of his fellows. Biblical orthodoxy, unless it be unreal "dead" orthodoxy, manifests itself by a deep sense of responsibility toward those who need the Christian's service. The Christian's responsibility is as great as his opportunity for service. But to render such service effectively, the principle of separation from worldliness is essential. Worldly, liberalistic religiousness ceases to be a light of the world and a salt to the earth.

President S. K. Mosiman says concerning the work of Christ:

> Jesus Christ did not come to bring a set of theological doctrines; the apostles were not interested in teaching a set of theological doctrines. Christ came to live a life and in His life and death to reveal God the Father, to mankind. Christianity today is a life lived in Christ and not a set of theological formulas over which to quarrel.

Similar expressions to the point could be quoted from certain other Mennonite writers, if space would permit. Doctrine is discounted and practical life emphasized. But the most important question, Who was Christ and what did He do for fallen man? — is a doctrinal one. And if Christ had done nothing more than to live a life and in His life and death reveal God (who is also revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures) He would not be the Redeemer of mankind. The

reatest work of Christ was the Atonement: shed-
ing His blood and giving His life, "the just for
he unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet.
:18). Living the right kind of life is of the great-
st importance provided that it is preceded and
ccompanied by faith in Christ and in His Atone-
nent for sin. Man could never save himself by
ollowing a good example; he could not be his own
avior. Salvation is the work of Christ on condi-
ion of faith and repentance.

IX

THE MODERNIST VIEW OF MISSION WORK

Religious liberalism has from the beginning been either indifferent or antagonistic to Christian missions. In recent years there has been a change in its attitude to missions. Liberalism, as represented by those who have accepted modern theology, is now professing friendliness to mission work. This change of attitude is due to a new view regarding the nature and purpose of missions which has come to prevail in liberalistic circles. The modern view of missions stands in strong contrast to the evangelical view.

Professor Edward Caldwell Moore, of Harvard University, in an article on *The Liberal Movement and Missions,* points out that "for the missionary achievements of the nineteenth century the churches described as orthodox have been almost wholly responsible." He says further:

> Hostility to missions, lack of sympathy with the aims, dissent from the methods of those eager in the missionary propaganda, *have been almost a party badge of the so-called liberal Christianity.*

The same author in his book on *The Spread of Christianity in the Modern World,* shows that rationalists and liberalists were "hostile to missions" for the reason that missions stood for the Biblical doctrine of salvation, just as the liberals were also "alienated from the church at home" for the same reason, namely because of the fidelity

of the church to the old Bible faith. This testimony is altogether in accordance with fact.

The real cause for this negative, declining attitude of liberalism to Christian missions is not far to seek. True missionary work is always based on the conviction that you have the truth and the truth must be given to others. "The real belief in absolute truth," says a writer in The Unpopular Review, "is a missionary state of mind, and carries with it the faith that truth is the one thing worth having." Modern liberalism denies the possibility of knowing absolute religious truth. Furthermore it considers all questions of religious doctrine and truth as secondary. Therefore it has no positive religious message. The best in Christianity and the best in heathen religions is, according to the new theology, only relatively true. If Christianity be better than some of the non-Christian religions, we are told, the difference is only in degree, indeed in some instances in but slight degree. The fact is that some of the liberals—the Unitarians, for example—frankly confess to their own substantial unity with certain heathen religions. A Unitarian writer, having called attention to the fact that religious liberalists have more in common with the Liberal Jews, than with orthodox Christianity, proceeds to say:

> Then we think of other non-Christian religions. Has it not been the Unitarian group that has led in the affirmation that *there are no heathen religions,* that there is one Father over all, and all true thought and feeling, yes, all dim groping after truth and right, as is divine in origin as the word of Hebrew seer or Christian leader?

One of the editors of The Christian Exponent in No. 1 of this paper, relates, as an example of Christian courtesy, that a missionary to Japan John Hyde De Forest, refused to speak of the Japanese as heathen. But why should it be discourteous to speak of those who do not believe in God and are worshipping idols as heathen? The fact is that John Hyde De Forest was, as his biography shows, an outspoken higher critic. He believed that there is no essential difference between heathenism and Christianity.

Representatives of religious liberalism in various denominations are of the opinion that the missionary should not come to the heathen claiming that Christianity is the one true religion, but he should appreciate the heathen religions and learn of them, and in turn have the heathen people appreciate Christianity and learn of it.

The science of Comparative Religion "has flooded the world with a new light," says Dr. William R. Lawrence. It has shown that "back of religions (both Christian and heathen) is religion, and each (religion of the world) is appreciated and the whole (namely universal religion) is apprehended through sympathy." The great heathen faiths should be studied, says this writer, "not to catalogue their errors, but to understand them." Missionary education should teach Christians "to appreciate non-Christian peoples and their religious faith, and to approach them (on the platform of universal religion) in a spirit of helpful comradeship," instead of undertaking to convert them. Professor Gerald Birney Smith,

of the University of Chicago, says: "Gradually we have come to see that it is religiously desirable that the Christianizing of non-Christian peoples shall mean *the strengthening and purification of the best religious and moral traits of their native faith,* rather than its complete eradication." Dr. John Herman Randall writes: "What an opportunity is presented today for religion to realize, at last, its true mission in the world and, minimizing all differences, begin to magnify those things common to all religions."

The view, held by the representatives of the new theology, that mission work means the "interpretation" of Christianity to the heathen peoples on the one hand, and the "interpretation" of the heathen religions to Christendom on the other, raises a number of puzzling questions. It is readily seen that the supposed task of such interpretation could not furnish the essential motive for mission work. This modern way of reciprocal religious interpreting implies that heathenism is met on a common basis and is recognized as one in essence with modern Christianity. Besides, if the modernist view of the Christian faith is accepted, namely that Christian doctrine is to be considered as of only secondary importance, to acquaint heathen peoples with it must also be a secondary matter. Neither could religious liberalists consistently expect to find the doctrines of non-Christian religions to be of a more vital character than the doctrines of the Christian faith. It follows that interpreting the West to the East

and the East to the West can not be a matter of primary religious import. *And such interpretation cannot be reasonably named mission work.* Be it repeated here for emphasis that the Unitarians are showing good sense by their refusal to speak of their own work as mission work when they simply enter into fellowship with representatives of heathen religions recognizing them as co-workers in a common cause.

But the new view of missions includes more than mere mutual interpretation of religion. Its burden is the social gospel. Instead of working for the salvation of individuals by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, modernist missionary endeavor undertakes to save society by socialization and reforms of various description. Dean Shailer Mathews, of the theological department of the University of Chicago, says on this point:

> We used to regard the foreign missionary as trying to save brands from the burning. Now we can see he is also putting out the conflagration (making endeavor for individual salvation unnecessary). — If Christianity can only rescue brands from the burning but has no power to put out the fire (then we have) a religion doomed to disappear with the advance of ethical liberalism. — The new social interest of Protestant Christianity.....*wants to save men into heaven by embodying the principles of the kingdom of heaven in the state.* It is less concerned in rescuing people than in educating them to keep them out of danger.

A writer who was formerly connected with a Christian college in China says:

> The church of today is increasingly emphasizing that part of its message which has to do with trans-

forming this world into the Kingdom of God. Christians are today attacking sin by trying to abolish poverty ignorance and disease. Pursuant to this conception missionaries art emphasizing in China, education, medical work, famine relief, and help for the unfortunate members of society. In all this they meet with a hearty response, for the Confucian school that has so dominated Chinese thought through the ages directs its energies largely toward making human society ideal. — *The social message of Christianity is strikingly in accord with the best of Chinese tradition.*

All unbiased students will admit that religious liberalism is more nearly akin to Confucianism than to New Testament Christianity.

Modernists regard religion as a means of what they suppose to be a higher end, namely the improvement of conditions on earth. Professor J. Gresham Machen writes on this point:

> Fifty years ago, missionaries made their appeal in the light of eternity. "Millions of men," they were accustomed to say, "are going down to eternal destruction; Jesus is a Savior sufficient for all; send us out therefore with the message of salvation while yet there is time." Some missionaries thank God, still speak in that way. But very many missionaries make quite a different appeal. "We are missionaries to India," they say. "Now India is in ferment; Bolshevism is creeping in; send us out to India that the menace may be checked." Or else they say: "We are missionaries to Japan; Japan will be dominated by militarism unless the principles of Jesus have sway; send us therefore to prevent the calamity of war."

Another object included in the modern view of missions is stated by Gerald Birney Smith: "One of the supreme tasks of the church (both

West and East) in a democratic age is to make universally accessible the historical interpretation of the Bible" i. e. the liberalistic religious views. In other words, the defenders of modernism consider it the church's business to spread the modernist theology. Nothing is more natural than this. You could not expect a liberalistic church to propagate the evangelical faith, could you? Now the greatest impediment in the way of such liberalistic endeavor is old fashioned New Testament Christianity. As for heathenism it decidedly has liberalistic tendencies

Professor William Brenton Greene, Jr., of Princeton Theological Seminary, in a timely article on *The Crises of Christianity,* writes,

> Again, the crisis of Christianity appears in this, that while her missionaries are multiplying, their gospel, it would seem, here and there, little by little, is being depleted and emasculated. Such is the warning that is now coming to us from China. Such is the warning that is beginning to come to us from other fields. Could anything be so appalling? We have been wont to look on our Foreign Missions as the demonstration that the church is obeying her Lord's last and great commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." But what if the gospel which *some* missionaries preach is another gospel which is not a gospel? This would prove treason both in the council tent and on the firing line.

The representatives of the modern view of missions have done very little along any line for the heathen nations. They have a way, however, of diverting eangelical mission effort into liberalistic channels. Liberalism, by the confession of some of its own adherents, lacks the

true missionary motive. Has it ever been heard of, that people are tithing themselves in order to spread the modern religious liberalism among heathen nations? We think not. But there are many, many loyal Christian believers who tithe themselves to assist in bringing the precious Gospel of salvation to those who grope in heathen darkness. They have the missionary spirit for the reason that they are convinced to have in the Christian faith the most valuable treasure. They realize that the greatest service to be rendered to others is to spread the faith through which they have found salvation. There are those who give tithes of their income though they themselves are doing without some things that are generally supposed to be needful. Some do not have the means to educate their own children properly. They make sacrifices out of love to their Lord, to bring to the heathen this priceless treasure. Now for religious liberalists to use such money for liberalistic purposes in accordance with the new view of missions, is by all odds the greatest offfence of which liberalism is guilty. That such conditions are possible is also a serious blot on the good name of the Christian Church. It is only fair to say that liberalism should not undertake the liberalization and socialization of the world if its own constituency is unwilling to support this work by furnishing the needed means.

The Indianapolis Convention

The annual convention of the World's Student

Volunteer Movement was held a few months ago in Indianapolis. This organization represents the cause of missions at large. It works in the interest of Protestant mission endeavors regardless of divergencies of creed. It does not differentiate between the old Bible faith and modernism. The organization seeks to advance the general mission cause without taking into consideration the fact that this cause is only partially given to the propagation of the Christian faith. The fact is disregarded that a large number of modernists have in the last decade been sent by Protestant mission societies and that these modernists on the mission fields are engaged in spreading the principles of modernism. Among the delegates assembled in Indianapolis many came from the most outspokenly liberalistic American colleges and seminaries. In England the modernization of this movement has progressed to such a degree that the Publishing House of the British branch of the organization has issued liberalistic literature of various description. The following quotation is taken from a book published by this publishing house:

> We may perhaps in some things be driven to modify or to ignore certain views of Christ, for example, in his theological or scientific statements where they seem to conflict with His spirit or with investigated facts.

In other words, in no line whatever, not even in matters of faith and theology, is Christ considered an authority. In consequence of this attitude of pronounced liberalism a large number

of evangelical student volunteers in England have renounced this organization to form a separate body standing for the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

As Christian believers we are not in the least interested in the missionary efforts put forth by modernists. On the contrary, we are interested in counteracting their destructive work on the mission field. It is a significant fact that The Christian Exponent has published two long articles — one of them an editorial — describing the Indianapolis Convention, without a word to indicate the real character of this movement. On the other hand, the same paper gave only a short notice (such as one should have supposed might have sufficed, as an item of news, on the said convention) to the Mennonite Fundamentals Conference held recently in Fulton County, Ohio.

X

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

Modernism rejects the Bible teaching on man's sinfulness and the Biblical conception of the world. The "exceeding sinfulness of sin," the existence of Satan and his kingdom, and the need of supernatural salvation are denied. For the Bible message of *personal* reconstruction the social gospel substitutes the call to *social* reconstruction.

Not long ago the General Secretary of Home Missions of one of the more prominent denominations in a public address set forth the nature and meaning of the social gospel, he himself being an ardent advocate of it. His address in substance follows.

> The thought that there is a kingdom of evil besides the kingdom of God is all wrong. There is only one kingdom and every man is a citizen of it. Since there is only one immanent life force, the world is a unit and man is also a unit. There is no room therefore for the old conception of sin. Furthermore there should be no attempt made to draw a line of distinction between things religious and secular, holy and unholy, Christian and non-Christian, the church and the world. Sin is, in the last analysis, not a personal but a social evil. It is the result of improper social conditions. This means that sin and evil cannot be quite so bad as they seem to be. Considered from the viewpoint of the social gospel the thought that God would condemn a man because of sin is offensive.
>
> Since man is inherently good and all men are God's children, there is in modern religion no place for individual salvation. The divine plan of salvation of which conservatives still speak is super-

stition. What is needed is not individual but social salvation. For although the world is God's kingdom, it does not follow that all is developed to perfection, or is incapable of further improvement. Such a conception would not fit into the scheme of general evolution. Salvation has become a social term. It means that the world must be made better socially by reforms and social improvements of various kinds, by education and moral advancement.

In a word, the social gospel addresses itself to the task to make the world a decent place to live in. This is the business of the church in the new age. What was formrely spoken of as religious endeavor is of value only in so far as it serves social ends.

The social gospel, in other words, lays enormous emphasis on man's physical and material well-being. Religion is held to be nothing more than a plan for social welfare. Christianity is considered a scheme of social improvement. It is reduced to humanitarian and social endeavors. Education and sanitation take the place of personal regeneration and the Holy Spirit. True spiritual Christianity is denied. "Our old religion was a process of saving a few souls here and there out of a world that we condemned as bad," says a prominent Methodist preacher of the state of New York; "the new religion is a community affair, and we will make our towns and our cities the right kind of places so that everybody will be a Christian as a matter of course. When it used to be hard to be good, it will become difficult to be bad." Individual salvation is practically spurned and denied.

Considering the question from the viewpoint of New Testament Christianity some fatal weaknesses of the social gospel are in evidence. The

new gospel identifies essence and fruit. Making social service the most important feature of Christianity, the fruit is mistaken for the essence. In fact, the fruit is divorced from the tree that produces it. Social betterment is excellent as the outgrowth of Christianity; the attempts to make it a substitute for the Christian religion have signally failed. The social gospel overlooks the fact that man's greatest needs are of a spiritual nature, and hence the greatest service to man is to supply these needs. The new gospel ignores the vital and fundamental isues that have to do with man's spiritual well-being and true betterment. The primary duty of the church, namely, to give spiritual food to the souls of men, is set aside. It is a wholesale effort for the improvement of mankind on the surface rather than for betterment in the mainspring of the heart where the seat of evil lies.

The social gospel, then, fails to distinguish between *Christian* service and *social* service. But the two are not identical. The successful business man, or laborer, is rendering valuable social service though he may not be a Christian, or he may be a Christian only nominally and hence may be lacking the Christian motive that is essential to Christian service.

Rejecting, in short, the Christian view of man's sinfulness and of an evil world, the social gospel prescribes reformation as the needed remedy. Reformation and man-wrought changes are believed adequate to make the individual as well

as the world all that is to be desired. Now it cannot be questioned for a moment that reform is good in its place. If a thief ceases to steal and begins to work for an honest living, he is doing a praiseworthy thing. Christianity does not hold the absurd view that the vicious and profligate are as desirable members of society as they who live honorable lives. But it is the church's business to stand for Christianization in the New Testament sense, not for mere reformation. A sinner who reforms is not for that reason a Christian. Reformation will not change the human heart. Regeneration is the work of God.

Social service as a substitute for the old Gospel message has been tried out by Unitarians and other liberal churches. There is abundant proof to show that it has utterly failed, a fact that is persistently ignored by its present advocates. The churches which have embraced the social gospel, says a writer in The Harvard Theological Review, "have distinctly weakened their life and influence." A writer in The Biblical World says: "The secularization of the activities of the church has weakened its spiritual life and emptied its pews of devout worshippers."

XI

DO SCIENCE AND RELIGION CONFLICT?

Between the natural and the supernatural, or miraculous, there is a vital difference, yet it is needful to keep in mind that God may use natural law to accomplish a particular purpose. The supernatural, on the other hand, is done above and beyond natural law. To say with modernism that the supernatural is impossible is to deny the omnipotence of God.

The statement that there is no conflict between science and religion has various meanings depending upon the personal position of the one who may use such an expression. A Christian believer saying that there is no conflict between science and religion means that the claims of modern science, in so far as they are antagonistic to Scripture, are unfounded. A modernist using the same expression means the very contrary, namely that religion is acceptable only in so far as it is based on natural law and is explainable by science.

Now the principal facts on which the Christian religion is founded are of miraculous nature. The incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ and other miracles cannot be explained by natural law or science, neither can the divine work of grace in the human heart be so explained. It is due to the direct working of the Holy Spirit. These things are consequently disowned by the

more advanced modernists. They hold a monistic view of the world and insist that there is no such thing as the working of God above and beyond natural law. They declare that all truth is uniform with the same laws of nature and therefore the supernatural is unreal. They deny that something that is out of harmony with the truth of natural law ever took pace.

In an article in the Goshen College Record, a few years ago, it was stated that "two sets of truth" could not well be taught in the same school. N. E. Byers, in an article entitled *Our Future Place in Christian Education,* published in The Christian Evangel, says that for our colleges we need teachers "who can lead our best students to see that truth as we believe it is in full harmony with all truth as they know it." If this meant simply that they should be led to see that Mennonite doctrine is true, the question would be in order, why should it be only "our best students" that are led to recognize this? Is it not a fact that this is believed by Mennonites in general? Liberalistic science claims that the Bible is unreliable on questions in which it differs from certain suppositions and hypotheses of modern science. And instead of recognizing that the supernatural is not within the province of scientific investigation, modern science claims that all must be tested by science and natural law (science is, in fact, the truth of natural law) and that all real truth is in accordance with the same. Yet the supernatural does not agree with natural law. The most fundamental doctrines of

the faith are not in agreement with such truth as applies to natural occurrences.

Now modern science by taking an attitude of negation with reference to the supernatural, oversteps the bounds of its own realm. The fact is that nature itself and natural law is a proof of the possibility of the miracle. Nothing less than the supernatural, miraculous work of God can account for the existence of nature. Evolution does not offer a real explanation. Evolutionists themselves admit that they cannot explain how life originated upon earth. The origin of life calls for a work that is superior to natural law — a miracle. Again they who assert that man is nothing more than a highly developed animal make an assertion which is not only incapable of evidence but is clearly contrary to fact.

A miracle cannot be explained by natural law or by science, yet science is unscientific when it asserts that a miracle is impossible to God. There is no scientific evidence whatever against the omnipotence of God, or the Deity of Christ, or any other doctrine of the Christian faith. On the contrary, as already stated, nature itself is a witness for God, and there is in Christian experience abundant proof of the possibility of the supernatural and miraculous. The Christian believer who makes faithful use of his privileges, lives in the atmosphere of the supernatural. So far from believing that the supernatural is impossible, he is convinced that God's Word is true.

XII

NONRESISTANCE AND FUNDAMENTALISM

Under this title an editorial article was printed in The Christian Exponent, as already noted. The editor makes the following sweeping statement concerning the fundamentalists.

> We remember that in the late war they spoke of Jesus Christ as walking up and down through the trenches on the battle fields blessing the war, and those who fought in it."

Now this is clearly an unwarranted generalization. It is true that some of the fundamentalists (outside of nonresistant churches) as well as some of the modernists did this sort of thing. Yet the anti-modernists (not taking into consideration those within the nonresistant churches) have a better record in regard to this matter than the modernists.

The editor of The Christian Exponent refers to the modernist leader Harry Emerson Fosdick as one who has expressed himself approvingly on the point of nonresistance. However, the fact is that Fosdick has a decidedly unfavorable personal record as concerns this question. Before the war he, like other liberalists, believed that the world had reached such a stage of betterment and Christianization that war was a thing of the past; he held that an armed conflict is never justifiable. When the great war came, Fosdick published a pamphlet in which he explained that "circumstances alter

cases." He called upon the Christian church of America to support the war. Again in 1919 he published an article in the Atlantic Monthly, predicting a great revival of religion through the influence of the soldiers returning from France. At the present time he has swung back to the position which he held before the war. He now again admits that war is unchristian in character, though he is careful not to reject it outright. He says:

> I find it difficult to imagine any situation in which I shall feel justified in sanctioning or participating in another war.

This means that his attitude on the point in question will depend on the situation that may arise. As for the stand which the Conscientious Objectors — the real nonresistants — took in the war, he expressly repudiates their position. In the final analysis his position on the point in question does not differ from that of Lloyd George, who said recently: "As is well known, I was strongly for the war while the war lasted. Now I am just as strongly for peace."

Nor is Fosdick alone among the modernist leaders in taking a spineless attitude like this so long as the war continued. More than a dozen of these leaders could be named that have a similar record. Shailer Mathews, the head of the theological department of the University of Chicago, before the war actually defended the principle of nonresistance, and he maintained this position during the first stages of the conflict. But after America had become involved he wrote an editorial article in The Biblical World saying the most

unkind words about the Conscientious Objectors. In a recent article he again disapproves of war, though he does not defend the principle of non-resistance. He also warns of religious controversy, which obviously means that in his opinion no impediment should be laid in the way of modernism.

Now the facts are these: Before the war the modernists as a class declared that war was unjustifiable, since it did not fit into their scheme of world-improvement. The fundamentalists as a class did not believe that war was a thing of the past. When the war came there was no difference between these two classes. The modernists as well as the fundamentalists outside of the nonreistant churches supported the war while it lasted. Yet it is interesting to notice that among the more prominent church leaders of America there was apparently only one who for a long period gave practically all his time to war propaganda, and he is a modernist: Newell Dwight Hillis, D. D., of New York (now occupying the pulpit of Henry Ward Beecher) who by many is considered the greatest pulpit orator of America. He travelled through the land giving addresses in which he told hair-raising stories about Hun-atrocities and abjectness. On the other hand, the well-known fundamentalist leader, Philip Mauro, set an example which to all appearance none of the modernist leaders followed: He visited training camps to encourage Conscientious Objectors in their noble stand for Christian principle. That all the funda-

mentalists outside of the nonresistant churches favored the war is an obvious error.

It should be remembered that a man who denies Christ, disbelieving His Deity, His supernatural birth, and His resurrection, is not a Christian, even if he believed in the principle of nonresistance. It cannot be denied that there are Christians — believers in Christ — who are in error on the very important point of nonresistance. You would not say that there were no Christians among those who supported the last war, would you? There were Christians among them; but they were either unenlightened or disobedient. Important as is the principle of nonresistance, the doctrine of the Deity of Christ is more important. Placing first things first we have the fundamentals of the faith and then the principles and commandments that have reference to practical life and conduct. If you deny Christ, these principles lose their importance. Therefore, even if it were correct that Fosdick accepts the principle of nonresistance (which is not the case), the distance between us and a modernist, such as he is, would be greater than that between us and the fundamentalists (anti-modernists) even though many of them do not teach nonresistance. After all is said, the fact remains that fundamentalists in other churches have more in common with us than modernists who disown the fundamentals of the Christian faith. If there were liberalists who agree with the position which the conservative Mennonites take on the point of nonresistance (a supposition

that is quite improbable) this would not change the said fact.

To illustrate the point. The most eminent Russian writer, Tolstoy, defended the principle of nonresistance, but was not a Christian believer. Therefore, though he was right on an important point, his influence did not count for the Christian cause. On the contrary, his rejection of supernatural religion, his teachings on communism and other points had a decidedly detrimental influence on the Russian people. In spite of his views on nonresistance, Tolstoy was largely instrumental in preparing the way for Bolshevism in Russia. The Greek Catholic Russian state church has a long register of misdeeds and sins standing against her, yet she had the courage to excommunicate the greatest writer and most famous man of Russia for his flagrant infidelity, a man whom some of our popular American churches would doubtless have welcomed into their fold — Tolstoy.

Another illustration. The Mennonite Church at Ouddorp in Holland has been without a minister for two years. The congregation declined the offer to have their pulpit supplied at intervals by ministers of neighboring Mennonite churches, for the reason that these ministers are radically liberalistic. The congregation would have no services rather than listen to a preacher who denies the fundamentals of the faith. All efforts to secure a Mennonite minister who believes in the Scriptures as God's Word proved fruitless. Recently the congregation has extended a call to an anti-modernist

minister of the Reformed Church to become their pastor, presumably on the condition that he formally unite with the church. It need not be said that to call a Reformed preacher to the pastorate of a Mennonite Church is inconsistent, yet it is not so inconsistent as to give such a call to a modernist though he may be a Mennonite by name.

Then again we will do well to remember that the attitude of some of the Mennonites of America on the question of war did not differ so much from that of the outspoken supporters of the war. Norman Thomas, in his book, *The Conscientious Objector in America,* points out that President S. K. Mosiman gave the following advice to Mennonite boys:

> It is impossible for me to tell you what to do. This is a matter of conscience and it is your conscience that must decide.

The Mennonite Church has, on the contrary, always held that God's Word is the final authority. The point in question is, What does the Word teach regarding the principle of nonresistance? It cannot be doubted that thousands of Christian professors have served in the war without compunction of conscience. Conscience is a safe guide only when it is enlightened by the Word of God.

XIII

NONRESISTANCE AND MODERNIST IDEALISM

N. E. Byers writes in The Christian Exponent, No. 5:

> During the world war men were rallied to a high sounding slogan ("to make the world safe for democracy") at the time of a crisis, under the stress of a great excitement, by mass movement. Individuals by themselves had never been educated to such high and all-inclusive sympathies [to make the world safe for democracy through war] and when the excitement was over (as soon as the armistice was signed) each one dropped to his own level of character.

In the opinion of this writer then, those who took an active part in the world war were, while engaged in war, standing on a higher level of character than before or after the war. He thinks, when the excitement of war was over, they dropped to their former level because they had never been educated to such high and all-inclusive sympathies as they manifested during the war. We realize that the said writer does not desire to approve of war, and yet he thinks the men who were engaged in war were standing on a higher level of character while the war lasted.

The question is here in order, If this was the case, how is it to be accounted for that so many of the men lost out entirely both morally and religiously while engaged in military service? How is it possible that army chaplains even excused the

shocking profanity that the soldiers as a rule indulged in? How can men who are engaged in such exercises as bayonet practice in the camps and the horrors of actual warfare, stand on a higher level of character? Obviously the said writer does not speak here of character from the Christian viewpoint but from the point of view of modernist idealism. He has much to say in praise of such idealism but is there not here a striking proof of the inferiority of modern idealism?

There is not an unfavorable word to be said concerning true ideals, yet the modern idealism lacks the Christian foundation, motive and background. It has no true foundation to build upon, therefore it suffers from uncertainty and spinelessness. No philosophical idealism can do away with the fact that the longer the war lasted, the more unfit became the men for effecting a betterment of conditions in church and state after their return. And a few more years of war would have meant the end of European civilization. The fact remains that war is the greatest curse and enemy of mankind. A great many of those who once believed that it meant a step upward for them to become a part of the military machine are of different opinion today.

The editor of a religious weekly published in Chicago has recently expressed himself on the point in question in a way that deserves attention. The following quotation is somewhat lengthy but is just to the point and is worth reading.

> A great question mark has been written over the whole war. Steadily the truth has been forcing itself

upon us all that what was passed for idealism during the war was a compound of sentimentality and propaganda. It served its purpose of stimulating the people to fight; it won the war. But when the tumult and shouting had died this pseudo-idealism could not stand the test of reality. It was not idealism at all. It was an artificial though marvelously skillful manipulation of idealistic concepts which could not in the nature of things have the backing of reality. This is simply an abstract way of saying that the ideal aims and motives with which Mr. Wilson sought to sublimate the war and make it a holy thing were all along and have since proved to be false to fact. It is a hard thing to say, but it no longer requires courage to say it, since practically every voice from that of Mr. Lloyd George to the Chicago Tribune now joins in an almost unanimous verdict that the war was a dead loss even to the victors.

Our world war did just the same thing that war has always done — it sought to sanctify itself with the vestments of the highest idealism it could command. Mr. Wilson declared that this was God's war, a war for human liberty. And men believed him. He believed himself. The spirit of war had filled the world. It held us all. It held our scholar president. In our war mood he seemed a prophet, a spokesman for God. Our idealism was the idealism of a dream. We had been caught up into the air of unreality and there was a wide space between us and the firm ground of truth.

We now begin to see that we have believed lies. This war was not waged to end war. It was not a universal errand of chivalry on behalf of the oppressed. It was not a war to make the world safe for democracy.

The opinion that the soldiers during the war had risen above their former level of character, is not true to fact.

XIV

WHAT IS RELIGIOUS INDIVIDUALISM?

One of the innate characteristics of modernism is an aversion against authority, especially against authoritative statement of doctrine and against doctrinal tests of any kind.

J. E. Hartzler said in the address previously mentioned, given at a session of the All-Mennonite Convention:

> How the church ever passed from the Sermon on the Mount to the Nicene Creed will always be a mystery. Nothing but a philosophical acrobatic stunt will explain.

As if the Nicene Creed, that is to say, the confession of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, were not in perfect agreement with the Sermon on the Mount. In fact, a number of the fundamentals are either expressed or implied in the Sermon on the Mount, and the rest of the fundamentals are taught in other parts of the Scriptures. That they are not all mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount does not detract from their authoritative value.

The editor of The Christian Exponent, in a recent editorial, declares that "we stand solidly on the evangelical faith and the principles of Christ" and then says nevertheless that theology, or doctrine, and faith are of minor importance. These are his words:

> We offer as a basis for unity and for the solution of our present difficulties only one remedy and one rule, viz., that Christians so-called will really follow

> the Christ whom they profess, and that all of us will make a sincere and earnest effort to make our first and primary concern not theology, creed or custom, but to know and to do His will.

A superficial reading of these sentences may not disclose their real meaning. Certainly no Christian believer would think of saying a word against the importance of knowing and doing the will of Christ. This is of the utmost importance provided you accept the doctrine of the true Deity of Christ, that is to say, that you do not have a modernized view of it such, for example, as the socialists have who claim that Christ was a great social reformer and they are following Him and doing His will when they devote themselves to socialistic propaganda.

S. Burkhard, in the letter mentioned before, says:

> Jesus is the champion of life and dedicated his whole life to the program of bringing the more abundant life to every man.

This writer gives a description of the life of which, in his opinion, Jesus was the champion. His statements on this point are shocking to the believing Christian. He defines Christianity as liberty and demands a life free from the restraint which Christ himself and all His true followers believed essential.

Modernism holds that questions of theology, creed and doctrine are of comparatively little importance. Therefore, they tell us, it is the proper thing for Christian believers to extend the hand of Christian fellowship to those who question and

modernize the fundamentals of the faith. Now any one who is used to doing his own thinking will readily see that such doctrines as the inspiration of the Scriptures and the supernatural birth of Christ are of the most fundamental importance. If Christ were not the one He said He was, then His precepts and commands would lose much, if not all, of their importance. Nor can the Conservative Mennonite Church be accused of making light of the commands of the Lord, though we are emphasizing the fundamentals as of the greatest importance. On the other hand, an inquiry into the question, whether or not modernist congregations are keeping the commands of Christ will lead to surprising results. The fact is, that, as a rule, the modernists who consider the fundamentals of the faith as of secondary importance, hold the commands of Christ as of even less importance than they do the fundamentals.

In a recent number of De Zondagsbode, for example, the Mennonite minister of Dordrecht emphasizes this leading principle of liberalism, viz., that theology, doctrine and creed are secondary matters and should be treated as such. Yet no one who is acquainted with the facts would claim that the Mennonites of Holland, though they hold that practical questions are of greater importance, concern themselves as much about knowing and doing the will of Christ, as do those who hold that doctrine is of primary importance.

A basis of union, such as the editor of The Christian Exponent suggests, making theology

and creed secondary matters, is not a Scriptural basis. It is, in essence, liberalistic and in positive contradiction to Mennonite principles.

In an article *The Faith of Our Fathers*, published in The Christian Exponent, J. E. Hartzler says: The Fathers of the Church "knew that Christianity was not a religion which imposed dogmatic uniformity in matters of creed." He asserts further that they defended "the right of any person under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to freely interpret the Bible for him or herself." On the same question, C. Henry Smith, in his book, *The Mennonites*, has the following to say:

> Mennonitism is the essence of individualism. The individual is to interpret the Bible for himself; he is to worship as he pleases and to obey only his own conscience in all matters of religious faith.

The assertion of "the right of any person, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to freely interpret the Bible for him or herself" may sound innocent enough. Certainly no church would put itself on record as taking issue with the Holy Spirit's guidance. But the point in question is, how it is to be decided whether, in a given case, the claim of the Spirit's guidance is correct. We are told that every person must decide for himself. This is true in a sense. Religion is an individual, personal matter. But this does not answer the question what is to be done when there is disagreement in some particular case as to the correctness of a claim of the Holy Spirit's guidance in the interpretation of the Word. The early Mennonites disapproved the view that this matter

can be left entirely to the individual. In other words, they did not believe that every claim of the Spirit's guidance must be recognized by the Church. They insisted, on the contrary, that the spirits must be proved. So far from considering this a strictly individual matter, the right to decide the more serious questions of this sort was not even exercised by the congregation. The early Mennonites believed that it is the province of the Church as a unit, that is to say, the spokesmen or representatives of the various congregations, to decide on questions of faith and practice. History records a number of conferences held by Menno Simons and his co-workers to decide on important questions of doctrine and practice. The brotherhood evidently believed that the church leaders were best qualified to give such decisions.

That the early Mennonite Church held a well-defined position as to creed, doctrine and practice is an established fact. Only a few of the proofs can here be given. The writings of Menno Simons, Dirck Philips and others are defences of the faith and practice of the Church. Menno Simons' writings show that there arose in his day a numerous party advancing the claim that obedience to Christ's commands was not required where serious danger was involved. Since baptism was forbidden by the authorities, it was not to be practiced. Those who entertained such views were not recognized as members of the Church, any more than others who held that the position of the Church on the point of nonresistance was

wrong. There were in Menno Simons' time many Christian professors who claimed that the Scriptures teach infant baptism. It need not be said that such could not hold membership in the Mennonite Church. One of the bishops of the early Mennonite Church, Adam Pastor, gradually drifted into Unitarianism: the denial of the Deity of Christ. After earnest efforts had been made to reclaim him, he was excommunicated, notwithstanding his assertion that his view was Scriptural. In our day there are those who used to be members of the Mennonite Church and claim that they were led into Russellism by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In a word, the Church would lose its identity if the question of the Holy Spirit's leading would be left entirely to the individual members.

The opinion that it is not the Church's business to uphold a definite creed and that the Church should consider questions of doctrine and faith as secondary and leave them to the individual members to decide, is called individualism. It is readily seen that individualism is but another word for modernism. It means that there is to be no authority above the individual self. Today the strongest organization standing for religious individualism are the Unitarians. They claim to be absolute individualists but this is, after all, not a fact. A Unitarian professor wrote: "The bond of union among us all is the fight against the deity of Jesus Christ." So they, after all, take a position as concerns Christian doctrine, viz., a position of a

negative character. You are welcome to hold membership with them so long as you deny the fundamentals of the faith. However, many of the Unitarians realize that they are not a church; they call themselves a society. For this they deserve credit.

The state has its laws to which the citizens must conform and those who break the laws are temporarily separated by confinement in prisons. The church also has its creed according to which it is maintained and those who do not abide by it will lose their membership. The principle that every inhabitant of a given land should make his own laws, or, in other words, that every man should be a law unto himself, and that the state has no right to make binding laws — this is the principle of anarchy. Just so the assertion that the church should have no well-defined or binding creed, that she should not defend anything definite as concerns matters doctrinal and religious — that every member should follow his own autonomous conscience — this is the principle of *religious* anarchy. A group of people, or the population of a given territory, recognizing no civil authority, would not constitute a state. Neither is a group of persons defending religious individualism a church.

XV

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

Several Mennonite writers have advanced a strange interpretation of the principle of liberty of conscience. They say the early Mennonites defended this principle, which is a fact. Menno Simons and his co-workers held that neither civil government nor any person in authority should compel people to unite with a church. The Mennonite Fathers protested against the union of church and state and against persecution. Modernism on the other hand, claims that according to the principle of liberty of conscience, the Church should permit any one of its members to teach or practice anything that his own conscience may permit. Modernists say that the Church has no right to take to account a member whose conscience may be so wide and flexible as to permit him to do that which is clearly contrary to his own good and the good of the Christian cause.

In other words, modernism interprets the principle of liberty of conscience to mean religious individualism. This modern notion of liberty of conscience has, as already intimated, been ascribed by liberalistic writers to the early Mennonites. For example, in the circular letter sent by S. Burkhard to the Alumni of Goshen College, in March 1923, the following passage occurs:

> **The present crisis of the college and the church**

> at large involves two historic issues. The one is the cardinal doctrine which the church in its early history made one of its chief foundation stones. It is the doctrine of the right of one to live by the dictates of his own conscience. Today we are again facing this issue and are wondering whether the church will remain true to its historic foundations, or whether it will forget this cardinal doctrine and [refusing to give liberty on the points at issue] as a consequence divide itself into small and petty factions.

This is obviously the modernist view of liberty of conscience. And it is erroneously ascribed to the fathers of the Mennonite Church.

Giving this question a little thought will show that the modern view of liberty of conscience is the very opposite of the true view of religious liberty. An example may make this point clear. The Mennonite Church consists of persons who have united upon a creed concerning doctrine and practice. Unless you are a member only nominally, you believe in the doctrines and principles of the Church. Now suppose the case that a member turns Russellite (or modernist, as the case may be) and claims that according to the principle of liberty of conscience the Church cannot censure or exclude him. It seems almost impossible that such a claim could be seriously made. The fact is that to retain a Russellite as a member would be to burden the conscience of the loyal members of the Church. The Church could not with a good conscience grant such a thing. Unless the principle of liberty of conscience is nothing but a farce, it must give the Church the right to maintain a clear conscience and to exclude the Rus-

sellite or the modernist. On the other hand, it would be absurd to say that leaving the Mennonite Church would burden the Russellite's conscience. If he desired to retain his membership it would probably be for the reason that he has more influence over Mennonites so long as he is a member of the Church, or because he has some other ax to grind.

Modernism has developed a type of conscience that differs radically from the Christian conscience of the old heroes of the faith. In our day liberalistic professors who have discarded the Bible faith think, as a rule, that to ask them to resign their office in an orthodox church is to oppress their conscience and to persecute them. When a number of years ago a minister in a prominent denomination offended his church by his new theology views, the opinion was publicly expressed that to ask him to resign his paying position would be a form of persecution, since he could probably not earn as much in another profession. On the other hand the mighty men of faith who defended the principle of religious freedom did not find it in their conscience to remain in a church from which they differed in faith; they withdrew, though to do so may have meant for them the most cruel persecution.

S. Burkhard says in the letter quoted above:

> Yesterday our people died for their liberty of conscience, but today in turn we are telling our children that if they wish to remain in the church they must submit their consciences to the dictates of the 'authorities.' The word 'authority' is a much over-

worked word in the circles of the church, and its administration often is a flat denial of the validity of the idealism for which we propose to stand.

When once the 'authorities' of the church succeed in crushing out all liberty of conscience and thought, and have denied one the right of self-respect, and have taken away ones life (not physical) and have turned the college into a graveyard of consciences, then they will succeed in crushing out all rebellion from the college, and there will be no spirit of revolt there, because there is no life.

The spirit of revolt will always be found in a man when someone else is holding him down and denying him the right of freedom and self-respect.

Is this not strange language from a Mennonite educator? And is not his position as regards the question of liberty of conscience unacceptable to thinking persons? The question regarding the influence of such Mennonite educators is a serious one. Could it be possible, we must ask, that our young people who are attending state schools are exposed to greater dangers than those who are sitting at the feet of a Mennonite professor who defines Mennonitism as liberty and uses language such as this writer regarding the Church? The often repeated claim of such men that it is their business to train the future leaders of the Church is significant.

A Charge Against the Bishops

In No. 6 of The Christian Exponent, J. E. Hartzler expresses the opinion that "overhead human authority" and "government by bishops" can not dwell under the same roof with freedom of

conscience. If this view were correct, bishops would find themselves evidently in a serious predicament. The constitution of practically all civilized countries guarantees liberty of conscience to every person. To take a position against freedom of conscience is to violate the Constitution of the United States. He who dares to do this makes himself liable to prosecution.

But on what ground is this charge made? Do the bishops of any church offend against the principle of liberty of conscience? Do they compel people to unite with the organization which they represent, or to remain in the church, against their own will? Not by any means. They do not interfere with any one's religious liberty by "keeping house" in accordance with the creed and regulations of the Church. Enforcing church regulations is not contrary to the principle of liberty of conscience, else the churches which have no bishops and yet maintain proper discipline would offend against this principle the same as the churches that have bishops. The fact is that stricter order and discipline is maintained in certain denominations having a strictly congregational polity than in some other churches that are ruled by bishops. The Methodists are an illustration to the point. Some of the smaller Methodist bodies, that have no bishops, as for example, the Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists, maintain far stricter discipline than the Methodist Episcopal Church which is ruled by bishops.

XVI

THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Under this heading J. E. Hartzler, President of Witmarsum Theological Seminary (formerly President of Goshen College) published two articles in The Christian Exponent. With reference to the faith of our Fathers he claims that there were "four fundamental principles which inspired them to action and which led finally to the establishment of the Church." Now of the four principles which this writer enumerates, three are merely interpretations of the principle of liberty. They are: The right of the interpretation of Scripture for any person; the right of liberty of conscience; and the right of religious toleration.

While the said writer claims that of the four fundamental principles of Mennonitism three have to do with liberty or freedom, another Mennonite writer goes even farther. S. Burkhard says, in the letter mentioned before, that "the historic idealism of the Mennonite Church" is nothing more nor less than the assertion of the principle of liberty. This "historic idealism," he states, consists in upholding the two cardinal doctrines of liberty of conscience and nonresistance. The first of these doctrines he interprets to mean the autonomy of conscience, or the rejection of all authority higher than the individual self.

Still more strange is his interpretation of the

doctrine of nonresistance. He says this doctrine means more than that one should not take the life of another (which is, of course, true). He claims the meaning of the doctrine of nonresistance is that every one should be permitted to live, and to live as he may desire. He says nonresistance means that the Church must give every member the right to live as he may desire. He says further that the Church is violating the principle of nonresistance by setting up regulations and restrictions. Now this is a view of nonresistance that cannot be taken seriously. The opinion that such is "the historic idealism of the Mennonite Church," that is to say, this was the position of the Fathers of the Church, is absurd.

Speaking of "the two historic issues" of the Church, this writer, thus, interprets the one (liberty of conscience) to mean that you insist on your own personal liberty; and the other (nonresistance) that you grant personal liberty to others. These two principles, he says, "form the heart and core of the religion of Jesus." All this means that in his view the cardinal doctrines of the Mennonite Church may be defined by one word: liberty.

It cannot be denied that liberty is an important factor in religious and moral endeavor. Yet liberty is of real value only as it presents opportunity to pursue some worthy purpose. The Fathers of the Mennonite Church protested against the tyranny of those who denied them the right of liberty of conscience, the right to worship and live in accordance with their Christian con-

viction. They did not appreciate liberty so much as an end in itself but rather as a means to a higher end. They were interested in liberty in so far as it would enable them to live the doctrine of Christ unmolested. They desired no other liberty. The cardinal principle of the Church is not liberty but it is to lay hold on God's Word in simple faith and to order one's life according to it.

Modernism substitutes the principle of liberty for the fundamentals of the faith. It sets aside the faith once for all delivered to the saints and makes liberty the principal thing. It makes an idol of liberty. Christianity teaches that there is something higher than liberty. In fact, liberty as an end in itself, that is to say, if it has no religious or moral objective, is not true liberty, no more than that anarchy is political liberty.

The Mennonites of Holland furnish an object lesson. About the year 1860 they began to drift into theological liberalism. Today they are radically modernistic. The general condition of the Mennonite Churches of Holland is sad indeed. To what length they go in the open denial of the faith is well-nigh unbelievable. A majority of their ministers do not believe that answer to prayer is possible. Now Professor Leuba, of Bryn Mawr College, who is an avowed unbeliever, classifies those who do not believe in a God who answers prayer as atheists, though they may profess faith in God. If his view is right, all who do not recognize the existence of a God who in His omnipotence can answer prayer, are to be

classed with atheists. One of the small number of the more conservative Mennonite ministers of Holland mentioned recently in their church paper that a Mennonite minister had reproved one of his members for "saying grace" i. e. having prayer before meals.

The principles held by the more advanced modernist Mennonites of America are fully accepted and practiced by the Mennonites of Holland. They hold questions of faith and doctrine as strictly secondary matters on which they grant full liberty. In fact they stand for nothing else but liberty. They are identified with individualism which means that each individual is considered an authority unto itself and will recognize no other authority. They defend the autonomy of the individual. Each church member is to be governed by the rules that he may lay down for himself. The right of the Church to formulate such rules for the members is denied. The Church is not permitted to have any say in the point of faith of the church members. This means that these churches are like the most radical type of Unitarian churches, or societies, in America. Like our Unitarians, they have no positive teachings except their positive denial of the old Bible faith. And again they are like our Unitarians in spending their energies in their opposition to the Christian faith. As one of the Holland Mennonite ministers has said, "Our business is to fight orthodoxy." They find themselves obliged to apply to the Mennonites of other countries to assist them in the sup-

port of their missions, but at the same time the reports published in their church paper show that they give thousands of dollars for the strengthening of modernism in Germany and Austria. In fact the principal modernist paper of Germany, Die Christliche Welt, would probably have ceased to exist were it not for the financial help of modernists of other countries, and the Mennonites of Holland are among those whose aid has kept this paper alive.

To return, after this digression, to our subject: religious liberty, we shall quote one of the most prominent modernist Mennonite ministers of Holland, Ds. F. Dijkema, of Amsterdam, on the point in question. His statement is important showing, as it does, that the substitution of the principle of liberty for the Christian faith has proved a failure. This writer readily admits that modernism, having repudiated the authority of Scripture, is lacking a foundation and that, unless a foundation may be found for it, it has no future as a substitute for the Christian faith. He says:

> What the last half century has taught us is that the modernistic teachings did not show the vitality which we had expected them to have. And if we ask for the reason why we have been disappointed in our hope the answer is principally twofold: Modernism has found it impossible to create for itself a theological foundation; it has no unifying theology, no common fundamental principle, and secondly the masses of the people have not been attracted by it; we did not succeed in the effort to interest them in the liberalistic teachings.
>
> We have no settled points of doctrine, but what

do we have? Is there not more clearness of aim needed, a greater certainty than we now have?

The question remains, Can there be found for modernism a positive fundamental principle? It has been supposed that the principle of liberty or freedom will serve this purpose. But, as Professor Opzoomer has recently said, "To be a Protestant it is not sufficient to have a zeal for liberty. It is true that the principle of faith loses its strength without the principle of freedom, but the principle of freedom is meaningless without the principle of faith." Liberty is after all a negative conception and can therefore not be considered the common fundamental principle of the modernists.

Professor Roessingh has shown that now, since the modernists have dropped the belief in an authoritative divine revelation, they are lacking a foundation.

XVII

RESTRICTIONS

We have seen that, in the view of modernist Mennonites, "the historic faith of the Church" of which they have so much to say, may be summed up in one word: liberty. If this were the correct view, it would follow that what is known as restrictions would be the greatest violation of Mennonite principle.

From the earliest time the Mennonite Church has laid down certain restrictions — rules of conduct — that were obligatory for the members. These restrictions had reference to worldliness in general and to such points as dress, manner of life, worldly amusements, etc., in particular. If the church members were convinced Mennonites, they believed such restrictions to be a necessary characteristic of a true Christian Church. The cry that the restrictions are conflicting with the personal liberty of those who were "set free" by Christ was in those early days raised, not by church members (who by their free choice had united with the Church) but by outside opponents of the Church and enemies of the cause.

In our day there are those within the borders of the Church who have raised the fervent cry, "no restrictions." An expression on this point is found in the letter mentioned in a previous paragraph which was sent by Samuel Burkhard, to

the Alumni of Goshen College. In this letter the words of Christ concerning the more abundant life, are quoted and it is claimed that this life cannot be lived under the restrictions imposed by the Church. With reference to these restrictions the letter says:

> Many men and women have been denied the birthright for which their nature called because someone had forced upon them to live within a man-made cage.

The writer of the letter set himself the task to show that to accept the said restrictions is contrary to the teachings of the Fathers of the Church. To quote again from the letter:

> The fathers of the Church revolted for the same reason that our young people are now in a spirit of revolt.

Again J. E. Hartzler, in his article *The Faith of Our Fathers,* says with clear reference to these restrictions:

> Instead of making it impossible for our young people to stay in the Church, we must set in motion forces that will make it practically impossible for them to leave the Church.

This is a most remarkable statement. It is made by the president of the institution which claims to be the theological seminary, or ministers' training school, of five branches of the Mennonites, including our Church. The regulations in force in the Church, says this writer, compel our young people to leave the Church. Now these restrictions are upheld not merely by individuals, or sections of the Church, but by the whole Church, as represented by our conferences.

It is not almost unbelievable that the President of the institution which claims to be the theological seminary of the Church has the courage to make such insinuations—that he comes out in what is nothing less than open revolt against the Church in which he also personally claims membership. It is safe to say that a parallel case can scarcely be found in history. And President Hartzler is evidently doing his best to lead our young people in the the way he has chosen. (Witmarsum Theological Seminary, though located in Bluffton, Ohio, is not the same institution as Bluffton College.)

The general position of Witmarsum Theological Seminary is clear from various expressions both written and oral of its president as well as of some of its professors. One of the latter has given grave offence in various places by his bold denial of the resurrection of Christ. Why are these things mentioned here? Would it not be better to pass them over in silence? It would indeed be right to do so if the questions involved were not issues of life and death to the Church. The question of avoiding the displeasure of individuals must in such matters always be a secondary consideration. If it is necessary to speak plainly concerning non-Mennonite modernist schools, it is even more needful to do so regarding Mennonite institutions.

Those of our educators who are attempting to lead our young people in a revolt against the Church have asserted that dress is a matter that is religiously indifferent and the Church has no right to make rules in regard to it. They deny

that there is a close relationship between this matter and Christian experience. This is indeed strange. Clearly it is easy to dress in a way that is inconsistent for a Christian professor. The early Christians, in accordance with Scripture teaching and principle, stood for simplicity of attire. And all churches that believed it to be the church's calling to teach and testify against worldliness have generally followed their example on this point.

To make clear the point of the original position of one of the larger denominations — the Methodists — on the question of worldliness, we shall quote from the writings of one of the Methodist pioneer preachers in the Middle West, Peter Cartwright. The following is taken from his autobiography, which he wrote when he was well advanced in years, in 1856. He says:

> I wish to say a few things here on the usages of the Methodist Episcopal Church. When I joined the Church, her ministers and members were a plain people; plain in dress and address. You could know a Methodist preacher by his plain dress as far as you could see him. The members were also plain, very plain in dress. They were not permitted to wear jewelry, or superfluous ornament, or extravagant dress of any kind, and this was the rule by which we walked, whether poor or rich, young or old. And although we knew then, well as we do now, that the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ does not consist in dress, or the cut of the garment, yet we then knew and know now that extravagant dress and superfluous ornaments engender pride, and lead to many hurtful lusts, directly at war with that humility and godly

example that becomes our relation to Christ, that sc preeminently becomes Christians.

In another chapter Cartwright says:

In these early days we had no pewed churches, no choirs, no organs; in a word we had no instrumental music in our churches anywhere. The Methodists in that early day dressed plain, attended their meetings faithfully, especially preaching, prayer and class-meetings. They wore no jewelry, no ruffles. They would frequently walk three or four miles to class-meetings and home again, on Sundays. They would go thirty or forty miles to their quarterly meetings. They could, nearly every soul of them, sing our hymns and spiritual songs. The Methodists of that day stood up and faced their preacher when they sung; they kneeled down in the public congregations as well as elsewhere, when the preacher said, "Let us pray." The abominable practice of sitting down during prayer was unknown among early Methodists. Parents did not allow their children to go to balls or plays; they did not send them to dancing schools. If Methodists had dressed in the same "superfluity of naughtiness' then as they do now, there were very few even out of the church that would have any confidence in their religion. But O, how things have changed in this age of the world. I do declare there was little or no necessity for preachers to say anything against fashionable and superfluous dressing in those primitive times of early Methodism; the very wicked themselves knew it was wrong and spoke out against it in the members of the church. The moment we saw members begin to trim in dress after the fashionable world, we all knew they would not hold out.

Again this writer says:

On the other hand, if religion must be defeated, the obligations of the Gospel loosened, the rules of the Church not exacted, a time-serving ministry employed,

this is, and has been, the death-knell to all churches so far as inward piety is concerned. Look at the needless, not to say sinful expenditures in older cities and districts of country; the unnecessary thousands expended, not in building needful and decent churches, for this is right, but ornamented churches to make a vain show and gratify pampered pride. Look at the ornamented pulpits, pewed and cushioned seats, organs and almost all kinds of instruments, with salaried choirs, and as proud and graceless as a fallen ghost, while millions upon millions of our fallen race are dying daily and peopling the regions of eternal woe for the want of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Having related a few instances of persons who laid aside superfluities of dress without being asked to do so, when they were converted, Cartwright says:

I state these cases to show that unless the heart is desperately hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, there is a solemn conviction on all minds that fashionable frivolities are all contrary to the humble spirit of our Saviour. But idolatry is dreadfully deceptive, and we must remember that no idolator hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God. Let Methodists take care.

If in the preceding paragraphs you substitute the word *Mennonite* for *Methodist,* you have a correct description of the early Mennonite congregations as concerns the point of unworldliness.

What may be the cause for the departure of the Methodist Church from the original ground held on the point in question? The answer is, of course, that there was a lapse in spirituality. But this is not the whole reason. It is sometimes said that where true spirituality exists, rules and regulations in regard to this point are unnecessary. Yet, even

for spiritual persons it is not impossible to be led into error. The fact is that there are spiritually minded persons who counteract their good influence by their worldliness.

Some of the Methodist circles of England began to grow cold and drift into worldliness before the death of John Wesley. When well advanced in years Wesley realized that he might have stemmed the tide of worldliness in dress if he and his coworkers had laid down more defininte rules and restrictions on this point. An important expression on worldliness in dress and its prevention is found in his sermons. He says in sermon 120, part 12:

> I am distressed. I know not what to do. I see what I might have done once. I might have said peremptorily and expressly, "Here I am; I and my Bible. I will not, I dare not vary from this book, either in great or small. I have no power to dispense with one jot or tittle of what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible Christian, not almost but altogether. Who will meet me on this ground- Join me on this, or not at all." With regard to dress in particular, I might have been as firm (and I now see it would have been far better) as either the people called Quakers or the Moravian brethren; — I might have said, "This is our manner of dress, which we know is both Scriptural and rational. If you join with us, you are to dress as we do; but you need not join us unless you please." But, alas! the time is now past; and what I can do now, I cannot tell."

In contrast with these sentiments of John Wesley we quote here from an article of N. E. Byers in The Christian Exponent, No. 10:

We have been more interested in conserving customs and traditional beliefs than in getting insight into saving truth and giving it to the world. In our home mission work have we not put our effort on a fight to save man-made customs of dress at the sacrifice of the saving of souls and the Christianizing of communities?

This question must be answered negatively. The fact is that our home missions have been successful in winning people for Christ. It is true that many of the converts were not willing to accept the restrictions asked by the Church. But discarding these restrictions would not remedy matters. If the Church would drop her unpopular teachings and regulations, there would be no good reason why we should desire converts to unite with our communion in preference to more popular churches. As for being interested in "traditional beliefs more than in getting insight into saving truth," it must be said that the supposed new insight into saving truth at the expense of the so-called traditional beliefs is unacceptable to us.

The quotation from John Wesley shows that he agreed with the position of the Mennonite Church on two important points: He considered principle of more importance than numbers (and yet he was a great missionary); and he believed the Church has the right to make regulations in regard to dress. This has always been the position of the Mennonite Church. Particularly in regard to the head dress of the sisters, the Church has always insisted on uniformity. Until less than a century ago in all the Mennonite churches of Switzerland, France, Baden, Wurttemberg,

Bavaria and Hesse the bonnet which is used in the Sonnenberg Church in Ohio was in use. When the writer was a boy in his teens there were in our congregation near Wuerzburg in Bavaria a few sisters left who wore this headgear, while about a score of years earlier it had been obligatory to wear it.

Ds. J. M. Leendertz, the Mennonite minister of Holland who visited the United States a few years ago, has written a pamphlet in the Dutch language on Mennonite life in America. It will be remembered that he is one of the most conservative Mennonite ministers in his fatherland, yet he cannot be said to be conservative in the sense we are using the term. What he says on the point of restrictions is of particular interest. Having mentioned various regulations of the Church in America, he continues:

> But these Mennonite peculiarities are not without spiritual value. The young people, who are brought up under these strict rules, have a very real feeling that the Christian life imposes special obligations.
>
> I am in doubt that it was to the benefit of the spiritual life of the Mennonites of Holland that during the last century they were spared these difficulties (arising from the observation and enforcement of such strict regulations), and that the dividing line between them and the worldly life has been well-nigh obliterated. I found among the American Mennonites a deep-rooted feeling of obligation toward God, a great moral and religious fervour, which is continually nourished and kept alive by their attitude of separation from the world.

XVIII

RELIGIOUS CERTAINTY

It is a noteworthy fact that, as shown in the preceding paragraph, one of the liberal Mennonites of Holland admits that modernist religion has no foundation. That religious liberals agree in the rejection of the authority of Scripture is generally known. Disowning the Scriptures as the final authority, they cannot consistently fall back on Scripture as an authority for the theology, or doctrine, which they may defend.

Strange as it may seem, not a few of the modernist theologians have asserted that their theology really needs no foundation. They are of the opinion that there is no religious truth that can be proven or established. All religious truth, they say, is relative, or subjective, or individualistic, which means that it is in fact not true, though for practical purposes it may be well to let it pass as acceptable. Modernists tell us that religious doctrine is to be used rather than accepted as true. Therefore the question of religious assurance is superfluous. There is indeed no occasion to speak of assurance with reference to a supposition that is not claimed to be true. Our Lord has said, it is foolish to build upon a foundation of sand, but what about those who are building without a foundation or, in other words, whose building is not real?

Methinks some one will here raise the ques-

tion, Are you not overstating the case? Is it possible that modernists do not claim that the religious opinions which they defend are true. Do they really admit that those opinions are only suppositions that are serving a useful purpose? Can it be that intelligent persons accept views which by their own advocates are not supposed to be true? To answer such queries we shall here quote a number of liberalistic writers on the point in question.

Dean Fenn, of Harvard University, a radical Unitarian, points out that modernists are "perfectly aware" that the liberalistic view of Jesus (denying His Deity) is incompatible with religious certainty and finality. "Liberalism can develop a conistently strong position," said a speaker in a liberal religious congress, "only as a basis of faith shall be discovered." Dr. William Adams Brown, former President of Union Theological Seminary, New York, has expressed the same opinion. Professor Gerald Birney Smith, of the University of Chicago, a prominent modernist leader, says the religious uncertainty that comes with the rejection of the authority of Scripture, has become "a burden that is fast becoming unendurable." In another instance the same author speaks of "the agony of uncertainty which is so prevalent in our day." He says further: "Thoughtful men and conscientious people are painfully aware that as yet nothing of a strong, positive character has come to take the place of the older type of theology." Professor Roy Wood Sellars, of the University of

Michigan, known to be an outspoken atheist, says: *"The church must give up the idea that it can teach final truth on any subject."* Therefore, so Professor Sellars argues, the church should leave religious questions alone.

Clearly, then, the modernist religion is lacking the most important part, namely a foundation. Could there be a more striking evidence of its secondary non-vital character? And must it not be assumed that people wo do their own thinking will eventually realize the unreasonableness of such a theology? An American President is credited with the saying that "you cannot fool the people all the time." But some of the modernist theologians *are seeking* a foundation for their position. And what sort of a foundation do they seek? Evidently not one of supernatural character, for they, in principle, reject supernaturalism inclusive of divine revelation as given in Scripture. The attempt to find a foundation, outside of Scripture, for the shreds of Christian theology which they may desire to maintain, is evidently futile. Science is silent on the points in question. The hope that something may "turn up" which may serve this purpose is indeed pathetic. It reminds one of the story of the shepherd who went to a goldsmith to inquire concerning the value of a big lump of gold. Asked if he had one, he replied, no, but he hoped to find one. How strange that in an age which boasts of its enlightenment there are those who will accept a theology which its defenders are laboring to maintain without a foundation.

XIX

COMPROMISE

The following passage is taken from the previously mentioned article *The Faith of Our Fathers,* by J. E. Hartzler:

> There are two enemies at work today with the express purpose of eliminating this faith from the earth. The one is an unreasonable and unwise liberalism; and the second is an unreasonable and un-Christian conservatism.

This writer, then, favors a compromise between liberalism and conservatism. What sort of a compromise he has in mind is evident from his expressions that have been quoted elsewhere. Now, in the opinion of the Fathers of the Mennonite Church, compromise is one of the chief enemies of the Christian cause.

It will be recalled that the early Mennonite Fathers originally started out on the same road as the leading reformers, Luther and Zwingli. But when these reformers, for reasons of expediency and outward success, accepted a union of the church with the state, they consented to compromise a number of teachings that they had formerly defended, especially such as concern the ordinances and the principle of nonresistance. Consequently the fathers of the Mennonite Church saw themselves compelled to part company with them. (On the question of the original attitude of the leading reformers on the question of infant

baptism see the little book *Infant Baptism,* to be obtained from our Publishing House).

It is worth noticing that while in our day the Church is bidden to compromise the fundamentals of the faith, such was not the case in those early days. The early Mennonites were asked by the most prominent Protestant leaders to enter into a compromise as concerned points of the ordinances, nonresistance, separation from the world, etc. Had they yielded these points, they would have avoided persecution. Believing the Scripture to be God's Word, they were minded to abide by their teachings. They pointed out that to do less was (in the language of Menno Simons) "to regard God as a dreamer and His Word as a fairly tale." Had the Fathers of the Church consented to compromise, there would never have been a Mennonite Church nor a single Mennonite martyr. While they counted not their own lives dear when loyalty to the Word was at stake, shall we compromise the fundamentals of the faith simply to please the world and a few anti-fundamentalist leaders?

Some of our Mennonite educators protest against dogmatic teaching but, strange to say, they teach dogmatically that the early Mennonites were individualists and that therefore the modernists are their true followers, while the Mennonite Church has departed from the faith of the Fathers. Such is the teaching to which some of our Mennonite young people are exposed today. There is no proof whatever for this modernist dogma. It is, by the way, a matter of regret that we do not

have in any language a Mennonite history that gives information, with quotations from the original sources, on these most important questions. A number of non-Mennonite scholars have pronounced the opinion that the Mennonites have the most interesting history. We have sadly neglected our own history.

XX

WHO ARE TRAITORS?

In an editorial article published in The Christian Exponent, fundamentalists are criticized for referring to modernists as "traitors." This naturally raises the question, "Who is a traitor?" A traitor, in the primary sense of the word, is a person who pretends to be a friend of the country in which he holds citizenship, but in reality gives aid to the cause of the enemies of the country. It is readily seen that the term *traitor* is properly applied to a modernist who attempts to hide his denial of Christian truth under the language of orthodoxy; one who gives himself the appearance of a believer when in fact he represents the cause of modernism. It is a matter of common knowledge that a majority, perhaps, of modernists permit themselves to be guided by the time-serving principle that you must be careful in your statements as concerns your actual belief. You must hide your liberalistic position on points that concern the fundamentals, and must speak so ambiguously that a Christian believer will never suspect that you disbelieve the fundamentals of the faith. This means that modernists, as a rule, consider their own faith of little consequence. If they believed that their modernized faith is a thing of real value, as compared with the old Bible faith, should they not have the courage of their con-

viction (if they hold their views from conviction) and freely proclaim their faith without dissimulation and hypocrisy? The fact is that such modernists show clearly that they consider their new faith as a matter of little consequence. They do not have sufficient faith in their faith to confess it. Has the world ever seen so weak a thing as this modernized faith? It consists in the last analysis of mere negations.

The editor of The Christian Exponent mentions in this connection the name of the modernist, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and his recent expression on the subject of war, as an example of courage. He thinks the term *traitor* is misapplied with reference to such a man. However, it would obviously be difficult to find a more conspicuous example of a radical modernist masquerading under the guise of a Christian believer, than that of Harry Emerson Fosdick. He has written religious books in which he is "hedging" to such extent that his modernism is hard to detect. His real colors he has shown in the published sermon, *Can the Fundamentalists Win?* Some of his modernist friends, as represented in a certain committee, have rebuked him for various statements made in that sermon, and have advised him to be more discreet and careful in the future. In a recent statement of his faith he is given to ambiguous terms to such extent that he was criticized even by Unitarians.

XXI

THE CHURCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Education is development and training of the mind. It is storing the mind with facts and ideas and learning how to use them. Education in itself is religiously and morally indifferent. Its use will depend on the character of the person who has acquired it. You may be an exemplary Christian and never have mastered your Grammar. Again there are those who are highly educated and do not have the wisdom to enter into the right relationship with God. Sometimes it is said that they who refuse "to become obedient to the Gospel" may be educated, but they are not educated in the right way. Yet a little reflection shows that salvation does not come by education but by faith and repentance and a consequent divine work of grace resulting in a change of heart.

One of the prominent educators of America, Professor Nathaniel Butler, says:

> We live no longer in the expectation that the millennium will come through education. We once thought that if we were in condition to found good schools and to bring the boys and girls under the influence of a good education, we could finally put a stop to all unrighteousness and sin. But the fact of it is that education with reference to that point is a total failure. Men do not act according to their knowledge, but they do the things they love to do. It matters not how highly we may educate the understanding, the man can, in spite of it, remain a slave to his passions. Mankind do not act according to their

best knowledge and wisdom, but do the things they love to do. While education of the intellect may cause its possessor to beware of the grosser sins, it, at the same time, may be only a means of making the man more cunning.

While this is true, it is likewise true that education is or may be made a most useful tool for the Lord's service. The Church needs her own schools for various reasons. Though education in itself is morally and religiously indifferent, the character of the teacher, — whether or not he is a Christian, whether a believer in the old Bible faith or a modernist, — is by no means a matter of indifference. The relationship between the teacher and student is such that the personal influence of the teacher can hardly be overestimated. Besides, the modernist teacher, with his prejudice against that which is supernatural; with his refusal to recognize Scripture as the final authority in all matters of which it treats, will invariably make assertions regarding certain questions of science, history, etc., that are mere unproven theories and suppositions. A case to the point is the definition of "the historic faith of the Church" which some of our liberalistic Mennonites have given. Along various lines unsupportable theories have been taught and accepted as facts.

The Mennonite Church has, in her endeavors in the way of higher education, encountered some rough waters. There were marked differences of opinion on various questions between those who were in immediate charge of our oldest institution

of higher learning and the Church, as represented by the Mennonite Board of Education.

About a year ago, N. E. Byers, Dean of Bluffton College, had an article on higher education in The Christian Evangel, the church paper of the Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites. In this article are found a number of statements that will go far to explain the cause of the difficulties which this writer had, as President of Goshen College, with the Mennonite Board of Education. Having referred to Menno Simons' appreciation of education, if it is used to the glory of God, he says:

> It is, however, true that churches have been inclined to subordinate the interests of the individual to that of the church, and so have at times been a hindrance to true education. It has always been true that institutions [such as the church] tend to become an end in themselves and thus become a burden rather than a help to man. As a result of this tendency in the past it has often been true that real progress in education was made only when it was taken out of the church.

These sentences will bear a second reading. Clearly the meaning is that the interests of the Church are of less importance than the interests of the individual and of education. In other words, in the opinion of the writer of this article, the Church should not be looked upon as an end in itself; she should not merely be interested in education to the extent that education is serving her purposes, but the cause of education should be considered superior to the cause of the Church. This means that in the view of the same writer,

the Church exists for a higher end and this end is education. The context shows that the writer here speaks of higher education and this, after all, is the privilege of comparatively few individuals, and he tells us that the interests of individuals should supersede those of the Church.

Menno Simons defines the church as the assembly of those who hear, believe, accept, and rightly fulfill the teachings of the Word. The church, in so far as it rightfully bears its name, is spoken of in Scripture as the body of Christ. The church is His bride who, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, is representing Him on earth and carrying on His work. The cause of the Church is the cause of the kingdom of God. There is no higher cause. The Church is an end in itself in so far as it is the body of Christ or, in other words, as it measures up to the Scripture standard. To say that the interests of individuals and of education are of more importance than the interests of the church is to make a statement that would have been shocking to the fathers of the Mennonite Church, if in their day some one would have made so unreasonable an assertion. It is a statement that is inspired by modernist idealism.

The Mennonite view of the Church is expressed in various places in the writings of the early Mennonites. In present-day literature some notable expressions are found in our hymns. We sing, for example:

> I love thy kingdom, Lord,
> The house of thine abode—

The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.
I love thy church, O God,
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be giv'n
Till toils and cares shall end.
Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heav'nly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

The Mennonite Church has always held that the Church, in so far as it measures up to the Scripture standard, is an end in itself, as already intimated. In other words, there is no higher end, no higher cause, than that of the Church of Jesus Christ. But the writer quoted above expresses the opinion, that the interests of the Church should be subordinated to the interests of individuals, and of education. Evidently in his view education should be considered the principal task of the Church.

And what, in the said writer's opinion, would be the duty or task of the Church in the way of higher education? We shall let him speak for himself in reply to this question. He says in the article mentioned above, published in The Christian Evangel:

> To do all this work so as to give it prestige that will not only commend it to our young people, but also have influence in the educational world, we

must give our colleges the financial support needed for the highest type of work. Our teachers must have the means to study, travel, do research work, and secure libraries, and be unhampered by financial worries in order to do this highest grade of service. We cannot depend upon men of independent means to do all this work. A good example of what a people really devoted to such a cause really can do, is shown in the history of Haverford College. This institution is controlled by a group of only forty-five hundred conservative orthodox Quakers, and is not much older than some of our Mennonite Colleges and yet they have a fine campus and equipment and an endowment fund of over three million dollars. As a result they have a small college recognized by all Educators as one of the strongest in America. Consequently, what they do there may influence higher education in general.

This is an expression of the first president of our college in Indiana on the question, what kind of a school it would be desirable for us to have. Obviously in his capacity as president of this institution he finally lost the hope of procuring sufficient support to make Goshen College such an institution. He consequently conceived of the idea of accomplishing this purpose by establishing a school by the cooperation of practically all Mennonites of America. Hence he went to Bluffton, Ohio, to undertake, with the help of others, to make of Bluffton College what for lack of support he failed to accomplish in Goshen. It is the former president of Goshen College who is principally responsible for the existence of the institution in Bluffton in its present form. Bluffton

College was formerly a school of the General Conference Mennonites only.

The question may here be raised, what would have been the result, the practical consequences, if the attempt to develop one of our institutions into a school such as described above would have been successful? Let us see.

In the first place we should notice that there is nothing whatever in Scripture to justify an endeavor on the part of the Church to establish a school with the aim of "influencing higher education in general." And it cannot be supposed that even Haverford College is measuring up to such a standard, though a professor here has all opportunity for study and travel, drawing a salary of at least five thousand dollars a year. The church cannot compete with the state and with worldly corporations on the field of higher education, at least not a numerically weak body such as the Mennonite Church. To attempt such a thing would be uncalled for and unwise. It could not help but spell disaster for the Church. Why? Simply because the motive prompting the Church to such an undertaking would not be in accord to the trust committed to her.

To undertake such a thing would be incompatible with the calling of the Church. If the Church would bend her energies upon establishing a great institution to influence higher education in general, instead of giving the Gospel to a sin-sick world, this would be a plain indication that through worldly ambition she is fallen from her

first estate and is no longer the bride of Him whom the world rewarded with a crown of thorns. The doctors who prescribe education as the means of salvation for the world are preaching "another gospel." Modernistic idealism is not Christianity though it come under a Mennonite cloak. Incomparatively great strides have been made in the world in the way of education, yet the nature of the world remains the same. The Church is interested in education, not as an end in itself, but in so far as it may be a means for advancing the cause of the Gospel.

The same writer says that Haverford College is controlled by a group of conservative, orthodox Quakers. A little investigation will show this to be incorrect. If the men who control this college are conservatives, then there is no such thing as modernism. They are in fact outspoken modernists. One fact must suffice as evidence. Recently the income of one of the endowments of this college has been used to produce a book that is radically liberalistic. Out of this endowment a number of men, including some Haverford professors, have been paid for writing articles on various topics. These articles have been published in a book under the title *Religious Foundations.* The book is highly recommended by modernist writers. The church paper of the Unitarians came out with a review under the significant heading *An Antidote to Fundamentalism.* The book is ommended by liberalists for use in modernist propaganda.

It is true that in the eyes of the world, in the view of the worldly minded, the interests of an institution like Haverford are of more importance than the interests of the Church. But to consider her interests inferior to those of individuals and of education and exert her energies in maintaining an institution such as described, with the aim of "influencing education in general," would be for the Church to sell her birthright for a mess of pottage. Not that education is to be discounted. Let the Church use it as it may serve her purposes, but the Church is not here for the sake of it. Our schools are here to serve the purposes and safeguard the interests of the Church; they are the servants of the Church and of the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ "loved the Church and gave Himself for it,"—He did not consider His own interests of more importance than those of the Church, though He had great reason to do so. If He had believed that the interests of the Church should be subordinated to those of education, He would probably have gone to Athens, the great intellectual center of the world, to become the leading educator and bring to Himself glory before the wise of this world. He gave His life and His blood on the cross for the Church. His message is one of redemption from sin and eternal salvation. His true bride will not betray her great trust, even though the Gospel is unpopular in the eyes of the world and of modernist idealism. It

does not behoove the bride of Christ to lust after vain worldly glory.

So soon as the Church considers her own interests of less importance than the interests of education, just so soon she may be sure to be led astray by education. It cannot possibly be otherwise. And obviously only a worldly, modernist church will consent to such a thing.

The fact deserves notice that those who consider the Church merely the servant of the schools, would abolish certain doctrines and regulations of the Church. The obvious reason is that an orthodox church will not accept the viewpoint of these men and hence will not support schools such as they desire. They consider religious doctrine as a secondary matter and are interested in religion principally for the reason and to the extent that religion (the Church) supports their educational undertakings.

XXII

GOSHEN COLLEGE FORMERLY AND NOW

S. Burkhard, a prominent alumnus of Goshen College, who has held professorships in Mennonite colleges says in the letter to the Alumni of Goshen College, that was mentioned before:

> The mission of Goshen College is not to teach either a liberal or conservative theology. In and of themselves no systems of thought are large enough to encircle the whole of life. Some men can honestly live best within a conservative system of thought and others just as honestly must have a more liberal system. "In my Father's house are many mansions." The mission of Christian education is not to become a partisan to any system of thought.

The letter from which this quotation is taken was, of course, sent out on the personal responsibility of the writer, though he may have had the assistance of others in preparing it. Yet the letter is a document of some importance. N. E. Byers, in the before mentioned circular letter, says he has read the letter and also the many replies the writer of it received. The writer himself in his second letter speaks of a great number of replies. It is widely known that various similar statements were made by other representatives of this institution who admitted that it was in their opinion not the mission of the college to teach conservative theology. It is known to all who were acquainted with actual conditions prevailing

in Goshen College that this sentiment was shared by the two first presidents of the college and by most of the teachers in the Biblical or theological department. Even some of the more conservative Bible teachers held modernized views. They were trained in liberalistic institutions and would not admit that there is a vital difference between the liberalistic and conservative theology. Though they were careful in their expressions with reference to the points at issue, some of them repeatedly made statements which any modernist would recognize as liberalistic, yet when they were questioned, they never admitted such a thing. They seemed to have unlearned the art of speaking plainly, without ambiguity, on the most vital points. They determinately refused to approve of the anti-modernist attitude of the Church. They refused to loyally support the Church and to recognize her right to define her own principles, doctrines and regulations. Their attitude was that the position of the Church was unacceptable to them.

For a few years the *Theology* of William Newton Clarke, a modernist theologian, was used as a text book. There was a lack of positiveness on the part of the teachers. On the whole, Christian doctrine was not treated as dogma founded on the infallible Word of God, but as human opinion in which every one could follow his own choice. There seemed to be a desire to develop in the student a tendency, as William Herbert Hobbs says, "to see both sides of every question and actually to be proud of never reaching a

definite decision as to which side was wrong and which right." Undoubtedly this would be the right position if we had not in the Scripture an authoritative divine revelation.

It may be recalled that Professor Albrecht Ritschl, the founder of the modernist theology, taught that there is no such thing as religious certainty. He held that, as concerns a given doctrine, the question is not whether it is true but whether it is useful. He shifted the issue from the truth of a doctrine to that of its value, or usefulness. Yet there are those who, in spite of the scorn of the world, continue to hold fast to the old-fashioned principle that truth is of more value than other values.

The Goshen Daily News-Times in an editorial article published less than a year ago, speaks of the cause of the difficulty between the Mennonite Board of Education and some of our educators. The editor says correctly that the immediate cause is to be sought in an effort, on the part of the Board, "to convert the college into an institution where teaching the tenets of religious faith will be a dominant factor." In other words, the Board insisted that the school should be conducted in harmony with the principles and regulations of the Church in order to serve the purpose for which it was established and maintained.

Now, in a circular letter written by N. E. Byers, dated May 15, 1923, the assertion is made that "the leaders on the present Board are not capable of properly conducting our educational

work." Again, the members of the Board of Education are referred to in the same letter as "sincere but blind leaders." These statements throw an interesting light on a situation that existed for a long period. For fifteen years the brethren in the Board exercised patience and forbearance toward one who refers to them in such terms as quoted above.

The cause of the difficulty obviously lies in fundamental differences of viewpoint between the Board and the former president of the said institution. The Mennonite Board of Education stands for the principle that there are no higher interests than those of the Church and that the schools are maintained for the sake of the cause of the Church. The Board, to repeat the language of the paper mentioned in a previous paragraph, takes the position that "the teachings of the tenets of religious faith should be the dominant factor," and the institution should serve the purposes of the Church. The president of the institution, on the contrary, claimed that the Board did not represent true Mennonitism, while he and the school stood for "the historic principles of the Church." He took the position that on the question of true Mennonitism he could speak more authoritatively than the Conferences and Boards. The question also, what the products of a Mennonite college should be like, he believed he could answer better than the Church. The fact is that he did not consider the question from a Mennonite viewpoint at all, but from the point of view of modernistic

idealism as held forth in many American institutions, notably Harvard University where he has been a student. From this viewpoint it matters little for what doctrine the Mennonite Church or any other church may stand, so long as the Church is willing to make education her highest end.

The opposition on the part of the first president of Goshen College and others to making Goshen College a Mennonite institution (as Mennonitism is defined by the Conferences and Boards of the Church) was very determinate and did not cease when these men severed their connection with Goshen College. The repeatedly mentioned letter by S. Burkhard calls upon the students and alumni to rise in revolt against the attempt to make Goshen College an institution meeting the demands of the Church. He says that to submit to the Church would be the end of "the idealism of our historic foundations." He says further:

> Unless the church will change its attitude toward an energetic young people and their education, there will always be unrest. When once the "authorities" [of the Church] succeed in crushing out all liberty of conscience and thought, and have denied one the right to self-respect, and have taken away one's life (not physical) and have turned the college into a graveyard of consciences, then they will have succeeded in crushing out all rebellion from the college, and there will be no spirit of revolt there because there is no life. If this comes to pass, how dare we look into the face of our Master who said: "I have come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

It is shocking that even the name of Christ

is used and His words quoted as favoring a revolt of our young people against the Church. His words concerning the more abundant life have been repeatedly used in a way that is nothing less than sacreligious.

It may be worth noticing that one of the points at which the writer of the said letter is finding fault with the Board of Education is their decided stand against intercollegiate competitive athletic games. The Board would not represent the Church if it approved of such games. Neither are the conservative Mennonite people standing alone in their declining attitude on this point: The following is a pertinent expression from Professor James Taft Hatfield, of Northwestern University, as published in a weekly paper.

> We have abdicated our high mission to college athletics. The whole spirit of the institution centers in a small band of highly specialized, husky sport-giants. That a center of higher learning should support such a college of gladiators is no more defensible, in strict logic, than the maintaining of a stud of racing-horses. A stadium where the games are held, costing $2,000,000 implies interest charge of at least $100,000 a year for the orgiastic spectacles; their delirious influence swamps the whole concern, like a mad, big-eared African elephant smashing through a missionary's prayer meeting. The finer values have about as fair a fighting chance to survive as a snowball in the Sahara.
>
> And so, looking back on a long educational career, I feel that we suffer from an appalling waste of fine resources; we lack leadership toward the true values of living; we are asphyxiated with worldliness.

In a weekly paper of a certain Mennonite college athletics is the dominant interest. This is the rule in fashionable higher institutions of learning.

The writer of the above mentioned letter says further:

> Goshen College has been the institution that has furnished most of our missionaries for India and South America. Does the Board of Education also want to issue the death warrant, for these mission stations in the name of the will of the church?

It is true that most of our missionaries have studied at Goshen College. Goshen was until more recently our only institution offering a complete college course and the school was older and better equipped than our other schools. To speak intelligently on the point raised in the above quotation it would be necessary to ascertain how many of our missionaries, that attended Goshen College, had decided to take up mission work before they went to Goshen. Again we should want to know how many of our young people felt a call for mission work before they attended college and changed their minds while they were students.

To persons who do their own thinking it is clear that the liberalistic attitude of Goshen can not be given credit for the large number of missionaries. To test modernism as to its effectiveness on this line, it would be necessary to work with young people that were brought up under modernist influences, in liberalistic families. Take a college that stands for the same "historic idealism" for which Goshen College until recently stood and that has for its students young people coming

from homes in which liberalistic influences prevail, and then see how many of such students will become foreign missionaries. The fact is that there are schools of this description, having students from modernist homes. It is extremely difficult to persuade such young people to join any church, whether modernist or evangelical, and the percentage of such students taking up religious work of any kind is negligible. This is an interesting study in itself. Only a few facts can here be given.

As already said, children brought up in liberalistic homes and educated in liberalistic schools are exceedingly difficult to win for any church. Only a small percentage of them will unite with the liberalistic church of their elders. The membership of the Unitarian Church, for example, recruits itself principally, in some sections almost wholly, from the ranks of the more conservative churches, that is to say from those who have been won for Christianity through evangelical influences but have made shipwreck of faith. The cause for this interesting fact is incidentally given by Professor Edward Caldwell Moore, of Harvard University, as follows:

> The true course is apparently to have religion and then to liberalize it. It is seemingly futile to have liberalism and then seek to inject religion into it.

In other words: If you desire that young people embrace religion, do not have them brought up in liberalistic homes or preach to them liberalism, for if they become liberalistic in thought,

you will find it difficult to arouse in them a real religious interest. But after they have become religious through conservative influences, you may win them for modernism and still hope that they will remain religious and be willing to take upon themselves the duties of membership in a liberalistic church.

Professor Douglas C. Macintosh, of Yale University, says similarly, liberalism "is much more efficient in conserving the faith of modern-minded men who are already Christian" than it is in the endeavor to lead non-Christians to regard Christianity as even probably true. This is an acknowledgment of the fact that persons brought up in liberalistic circles are admittedly difficult to win for a liberal church. Though such young people are liberalists, they evidently fail to see sufficient reason for the existence of the liberalistic church. Also, of the very small number of students in Unitarian theological seminaries only a minority is of Unitarian parentage.

The Mennonites in Holland, though they have their own theological seminary, had in forty years not a single missionary come from their own membership.

N. E. Byers says in the circular letter mentioned before that, as concerns the historic ideals for which Goshen College stood, these ideals are realized more fully in Bluffton College than they were in Goshen. If this be true and such idealism is to be given credit for the number of missionaries which attended Goshen, it follows

that the number of missionaries from Bluffton College would be even larger than of those from Goshen. The quotations from the letter follow without further comment.

> The progressive group at Goshen and the Bluffton Union group are so similar in their aims and needs that it will be for the mutual benefit of all to combine resources, faculty, student body and alumni to build up a strong college.
>
> While Goshen College for the present seems dead I think we can say that really Goshen has started rebuilding at Bluffton. Goshen supporters have always had three representatives on the Bluffton Board. At present there are seven former Goshenites on the faculty, and three others have put in two or more years each on the faculty. Some who had prominent positions on the Goshen faculty hold similar positions at Bluffton. Because of these facts I think we can say that a Goshen greater in possibilities than the first has been started at Bluffton with the cooperation of others with very similar aims, so that now, in the providence of God, our real cause can move forward unhindered.
>
> I feel that I know our young people well enough to be sure that many of them will see this larger cause and will rally to it. They were loyal to Goshen when they could not have the college they wanted, so I am sure they will be happy in a college which is in most respects all they have longed for and at the same time they can retain the unity of their group.

The closing of our oldest and largest college for a year has by many persons been considered a curious thing. Such a thing had never been heard of before. Many Christian denominations of America have witnessed their colleges and theological schools being slowly but surely conquered by modernism. This has resulted in con-

ditions that are unspeakably sad. The institutions in which the ministers of various denominations are educated have become hotbeds of modernism. Now a more formidable agency of evil, a more effective tool in the hands of the enemy, than such church schools cannot be named. The said denominations take the attitude that they need the higher institutions of learning even if they prove disloyal. There were protests against the modernism of their schools but this, as a rule, made no impression on those in charge of the professorships.

Our Board is led by the conviction that, important as educational institutions are, the Church cannot support schools that fail in loyalty to the Church, fail to safeguard our young people against dangers in evidence in other schools. A church school taking an attitude of defiance against the Church forfeits its right to exist. Though to close the institution, in order to build from a new foundation, was an unpopular, unmodern thing, yet in all probability an action that is more characteristically Mennonite, more perfectly in harmony with the spirit of the Mennonite Fathers was never taken by the Church.

Arrangements have been made for the opening of Goshen College with a full college course. The President of the college is well-known to the Church at large and has the confidence of the Church. His position as regards the points at issue is above question. The Dean also who received his training in a conservative theological

institution, may be relied upon to champion the doctrines for which the Mennonite Church stands. They are convinced, with the heads of our other schools, that scholarship and the old Bible faith are not antagonistic to each other and what has been done by some other denominations in the way of maintaining fully accredited colleges that take a definite conservative position as to the fundamentals and serve the cause of the church, can be done by the Mennonites. We feel that the Church may safely entrust the school to their hands and that the institution will be maintained in a way calculated to be of real service to the Church. Doubtless there will be problems, local and general, that will involve difficulties but we may be sure that the foundation is true. Let us, who believe in prayer, not forget Goshen College. There is no more valuable service that we may render.

XXIII

THE CHRISTIAN EXPONENT

Various quotations have been given from The Christian Exponent. The following sentence from an editorial article shows the general attitude and aim of this paper.

> To our sorrow and shame it must be admitted that as a church we have during these past few years been drifting more and more into two groups, each opposed to the other.

No one doubts the statement that two groups exist, though it would be more correct to say that a small group has risen besides the great body of the Church. This group, being of recent origin, has accepted the leadership of a few men who claim that the Church, as represented by our conferences, does not stand for true Mennonitism. These men take the position that the Church is not well informed on the question wherein Mennonitism really consists. They advance the view that the early Fathers of the Church held a position which is practically identical with modernism. The position of these men is one of anti-fundamentalism while the Church holds a strong anti-modernist position. They are out of sympathy with the anti-modernism of the Church. It is these men that have called The Christian Exponent into existence. The assertion of the editor that this paper does not stand for any particular group is unacceptable. The publishers and editors of this

paper are almost exclusively Goshen College alumni and former professors. The starting of the paper shows that they believed the time for a more aggressive attitude against conservative Mennonitism as represented by our conferences and leaders had come.

It is important to notice that evidently most of those who show an inclination to follow the way pointed out by the leaders in this group, are not fully aware of the real issues involved. Small as this group is, there is reason to believe that it would be far smaller, if it had been generally known that the principal leaders hold modernized religious views and consider questions of theology and creed as of secondary importance.

Evidently the expression that to our shame we have lost our unity and drifted into two groups has necessarily one of two meanings. It means either that the liberals are to be blamed for failing to win the whole Church for modernized religious views and thus to maintain unity; or it means that it is to our shame that the conservative Church declines to follow the leadership of the said few men into an attitude of anti-fundamentalism. It is clear that only in either one of these two ways could the drifting into two groups be avoided.

Without question The Christian Exponent, being the mouthpiece of the one group, takes the second of these views. In the same article the editor says:

> Another phase of the problem is that so far as any official bodies are concerned, there has been no conflict to speak of. At the last General Conference all seemed

> harmonious.....Only one group is in evidence. — Unless we are willing to hear each other and to give to others the same privileges and rights which we expect ourselves, we can hardly be said to have done our part in securing a proper understanding and solution of our problem.

In other words, it is the editor's opinion that the group which he represents should be granted equal rights and privileges with those who stand loyally for the doctrines and regulations of the Church. The question is, Could the Church grant such a desire? It is a matter of general knowledge that our bishops and leaders have been harshly censured and accused for taking an unyielding attitude toward modernism in its various phases.

Now viewing the question from the standpoint of the Mennonite faith and principles, it is clear that it would mean a calamity to the Church if our leaders were taking another attitude in the issues involved. And suppose the case that at this time of crisis the Church had leaders that yielded to the spirit of the age, such leaders could obviously not hope to win the Church as a whole for modernism. Only to the extent that they might succeed in keeping the real issue from the people, (or, in plain English, in winning the people by underhanded, deceptive methods) would they stand a chance to get the conservative Mennonites to follow them in the way of modernism, and it cannot be supposed that such leaders would find it possible to modernize the church as a whole in such a way. There would doubtless be many who would see the issue clearly and, instead of fol-

lowing such leaders, would decide to "go out from among them and be separate." It follows therefore that even if the Church at the present time had unfaithful leaders who acted on the principle that creed and doctrine are of only secondary importance (which is the most fundamental principle of modernism), such an attitude on the part of the leaders would not have prevented the Church from drifting into two groups. The question is, Can the conservatives be blamed for their loyalty to their conviction, or is the blame for the existence of two groups to be ascribed to the rise of a new party?

It is a significant fact that some of the books the readers of The Christian Exponent have been advised to read defend modernism. The book, *Lay Religion,* by H. T. Hodgkin, is reviewed in No. 2 by one of the editors. It is warmly recommended. A more dangerous book would be hard to find. The author frankly denies the fundamentals of the faith. A number of rankly liberalistic statements from this book are quoted in the book *Modern Religious Liberalism.*

The book *Things Fundamental,* by C. E. Jefferson, is advertised and recommended in No. 8 of The Christian Exponent. This book in one of a most dangerous type. Besides containing much that is unobjectionable it defends the most serious errors. The author does not believe that the opportunity to be saved ends with death. He gives strange definitions of the doctrine of inspiration. The Bible, he claims, is not God's Word (page

134). He speaks of the doctrine of verbal inspiration as "a silly superstition, a veritable reptile in the garden of the Lord." "Because of this dogma of inspiration," he says, "Christianity in the popular mind has been arrayed against science" (page 121). The first chapters of Genesis, he believes to be not history but fable.

It is to be remembered that the question regarding the nature and tendency of The Christian Exponent must be kept separate from the question of the motives and sincerity of the editor. Without question, a man may be in error and sincerely believe that he is right. It would be an evident misrepresentation to say that the editor is taking the same radical position on the points at issue, as do some of those that have elected him to this position and who are contributors to the paper. In the present pamphlet we have to do only with the position which the paper is taking and with its tendency and influence. The question of the motive of the editor and other leaders, or how they were led to such an attitude, is a secondary one and does not concern us here, except perhaps in a general way.

A number of papers are published in America by Mennonite bodies that are less conservative than our own communion, yet none of these papers is taking so outspoken an attitude of antifundamentalism as the new paper that is published by men of our own connection. This is a fact that is distressing. This paper claims to stand for the evangelical faith and in many instances

makes use of the language of such faith, and again, as cannot be denied, it also speaks the language of modernism. Now if our people in general would read such literature and expose themselves to such influences, there could be only one outcome. The American Mennonite Church would go the way the Church in Holland and North Germany has gone. In Holland the rise of modernism was similar to its rise among us. In fact the first representatives of modernism among the Mennonites of Holland were more conservative than are the leaders in our liberalistic group. On the other hand, there are numerous non-Mennonite publications that are taking an uncompromising attitude against modernism and are satisfactory as concerns their position on the fundamentals of the faith.

The existence of such a paper brings home to us the fact that our Publishing House is doing the Church a service which can scarcely be overestimated. Not that the brethren of the Publication Board or those in immediate charge at the House make the claim that the work done is beyond improvement, but the loyalty of the House to the faith and the Church in its general attitude and particularly as regards the issues at stake in the present time of crisis, is beyond question.

XXIV

CONCLUSION

There may be those who, when they read the definition of modernism in the first part of the present pamphlet, said to themselves that not all modernists in the Mennonite Church hold such views, at least not in regard to every point mentioned. This is cheerfully admitted, as has been repeatedly intimated. The point is — and this can not be doubted — that there is a group of modernist Mennonite leaders, some of them decidedly radical, and that they are taking a more or less aggressive and defiant attitude against the Church. It must be believed that most of those who show an inclination to follow these men are not fully informed as concerns their real position.

To what length some of our modernists are going in the rejection of the fundamentals of the faith, is almost unbelievable. The letter by S. Burkhard which has been repeatedly mentioned, is one among various examples. The writer of this letter holds that true Mennonitism may be defined in one word: liberty. He disowns conservative theology (theology is but another word for Christian doctrine) and all restrictions, claiming that they are contrary to the historic Mennonite faith. Indeed he says that he is opposed to making any theology, whether conservative or modernist, a paramount issue.

If this writer's definition of Mennonitism were correct, it would follow that there is not one true Mennonite congregation among the Mennonites of America. There is in America not one congregation having the Mennonite name that goes to such extremes of liberalism. One would have to go to the Unitarians and Universalists to find congregations such as this writer considers truly Mennonite. But these people are not Mennonites and do not desire to be known as such.

The Mennonites of Holland who, as pointed out elsewhere, hold similar ground with our outspoken modernists, do not claim to represent the historic faith of the Mennonite Church. They do not pretend to be followers of the early Fathers of the Church. So far from making any such claim, many of them have an unfavorable opinion of Menno Simons and the early Mennonites. At the time when the Life of Menno Simons, written by a Mennonite minister and historian of Holland, appeared, a number of years ago, the editor of The Mennonite said in a review that here the expression "wounded in the house of his friends" was applicable concerning Menno Simons. In fact, among the Roman Catholic authors that have written biographies of Martin Luther, there is at least one whose book is more satisfactory, considered from the Lutheran viewpoint, than is this biography of Menno Simons from the Mennonite standpoint, though it was written by a Mennonite minister. We repeat that the modernist Mennonites of Holland do not claim to be followers of

the early Mennonites and that they do not call themselves Mennonites, but *Doopsgezinden.* On the other hand, our American modernists claim that their modernism is the true Mennonitism, "the historic faith of the Church." They tell us that the conservative Mennonites have forsaken the faith of the Fathers. The most charitable view to take of such an assertion is that it is due to a lack of knowledge of Mennonite history.

It is a matter of common knowedge that our Mennonite modernists advance the claim that but for the attitude of a few conservative leaders, the Church would extend to them the rights and privileges which they desire. Some of them denounce the leaders, bishops and conferences, and claim that they are wielding authority that does not rightfully belong to them. There are two facts which they overlook. The first is that our people (leaving the bishops out of consideration) are with few exceptions decidedly conservative, anti-modernist.

The other fact overlooked by the modernists is that their attitude toward the Church is inconsistent with the principles which they defend. They say the principle of liberty is the essence of the historic faith of the Church but, like the opponents of the Church in the times of persecution, they do not recognize the liberty (or right) of the Church to continue steadfast in her conservative faith and practice. They claim that the Church has no right to maintain certain regulations. If they believed in the principle of liberty for others as well as for themselves they, instead of disturbing the peace of

the Church by their attitude of defiance and revolt (this is the expression used by some of them) would withdraw from a body whose position they do not share. Though these men are only a small handful as compared with the bishops and leaders of the Church, they would force their own position upon the Church at large.

The modernists and those who accept their leadership have undertaken to compel the Church to forsake her anti-modernist attitude and to give more liberty as concerns various regulations and restrictions. They think that they can force the Church to adopt a strictly congregational polity where conferences have no authority and every congregation is free as concerns its attitude to modernism, restrictions and regulations. Now by taking such an attitude toward the Church, the modernist leaders, as intimated above, are assuming far greater authority than our bishops are exercising. It is strange indeed that they denounce all "overhead authority" and then usurp authority which would exceed the power of those who have been chosen by the Church to fill places of authority. While some of them, on the one hand, claim that their attitude is one of loyalty to the Church, they, on the other hand, confess that they are in a state of revolt and encourage our young people to rise in revolt against the Church.

There are those who show an inclination to follow the modernist leaders for no other reason than because they desire a let-up on the part of the Church as concerns various regulations. But so

long as some of the principal leaders in the newly risen group are modernists, there can be no quest- as to the tendency of the movement. Experience shows that churches that befriend themselves with modernism are fast forsaking the Christian faith. This is the inevitable consequence.

If an illustration is permissible, modernism claims that the vines that are planted in the vineyard and are cultivated by the Church are not true grape vines. The more radical modernists would not recognize any of the vines as acceptable, while the more moderate ones disapprove of some of them. They assert that something better should be planted, yet they are willing to let the Church, or the conservatives, retain the belief that the old-fashioned grape vines are the real vines. All they ask of the Church is to give to modernist plants the same right as to the vines.

The plants of the Church and the plants of modernism are opposites and cannot both be grape vines. The plants of modernism have, as a rule, well-sounding names. When viewed in the light of Scripture, they turn out to be of the nature of briars and burdock and the like. Some one may say it is harsh language to speak of the doctrines of modernism as briars and weeds. But if the denial of the Christian truth did not deserve the predicate of weeds, it would follow that the evangelical doctrines are not grape vines.

Modernists say, it is wrong for the Church to be dogmatic and define which plants are true grape vines. They hold that the nature of the

plants that are to be cultivated is a secondary matter, therefore the Church is out of place when it insists on having only the old-fashioned vines. They hold that Mennonitism means liberty, and that it is contrary to the historic faith of the Church to deny them the right to plant in the vineyard what they may choose. Instead of starting their own vineyard, they insist that a true Mennonite Church must permit them to set out their own plants in the Church's vineyard. They demand that their plants must be given the same rights in the vineyard as the vines which the Church is planting and cultivating. They hold that the right of the Church to cultivate the vineyard does not mean that the plants of modernism may be destroyed. The most offensive claim of modernists is that the Fathers of the Church have ste the plants of modernism in the vineyard

Now unless the Church maintains the right to treat the modernist plants as that which they are in the light of God's word, there can be only one outcome. The briars and weeds of anti-fundamentalism and modernism will take possession of the vineyard of the Lord. The grape vines stand no chance where weeds are given a chance. Such a place would not deserve the name of a vineyard.

Let no one suppose for a moment that in this time of apostasy and worldliness the Church can maintain the faith without taking a decided stand against modernism, making an earnest effort, heeding the admonition to "put on the whole ar-

mor of God." Human nature is prone to err. Even Goethe, the greatest German poet, though he was not a Christian believer said, men follow error for the reason that to do so is easier than to embrace truth. To take the course of least resistance and yield to the anti-Christian spirit of the age is easier than to be loyal to Jesus Christ and fight the good fight of faith. It requires more earnest and determined effort to follow the truth than to yield to error.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that compromise with modernism means defeat. The thought that the cause of the old faith can be enhanced by a small measure of modernization is a delusion. "One thing is certain," says Dr. Henry B. Smith, "that infidel science will rout everything except thorough-going Christian orthodoxy. All the flabby theories will go overboard. The fight will be between a stiff, thorough-going orthodoxy and a stiff, thorough-going infidelity." A position of compromise is a losing position. It means that you virtually accept the liberal viewpoint.

We, as Mennonites, realize that we fall far short of exemplifying the Christian life in its fullness and of carrying out the will of the Lord. Yet as concerns faith and principles, we believe the Church would be disloyal to God's Word if it compromised them. Our faith and principles are our great treasure and it is for us to heed the injunction, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Modern Religious Liberalism

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